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TRUTH AND NOVELTY IN THEOLOGY

(Editor's note: *The following article appeared in the* Osservatore Romano *on Monday, March 15, of this year. Because of the intense interest it has aroused among theologians throughout the world, and because of the timeliness of its teaching, we have sought and obtained permission to publish a translation of this document for the readers of* The American Ecclesiastical Review.

The author of the article is the distinguished Fr. Mariano Cordovani, O.P., the Master of the Sacred Apostolic Palace. The translation is the work of the Rev. Dr. Paschal P. Parente, Professor of Sacred Theology at The Catholic University of America.)

Two things at least must strike anyone who has carefully read the great Encyclical of His Holiness Pope Pius XII on sacred liturgy: first, the number of errors that document was called upon to condemn and the many deviations and alterations it had to correct; second, the fact that the Church Magisterium by remaining ever faithful to its traditions does not fail to find a way both for advancing the knowledge of revealed truth and for promoting a more intensive practice of virtue.

Every theologian will have to keep in mind its doctrinal clarification on the essence of the holy sacrifice of the Mass; every one of the faithful will understand better his own way of taking part in that divine Sacrifice. A great jurist said that he has been assisting at Mass in a more enlightened way ever since he read that beautiful theological explanation.

Theologians as well as the more learned among the faithful find in the Magisterium of the Church a brilliant proof of a magnificent fact, namely, that truth in its intimate nature remains immutable even then when it manifests itself inexhaustible in the novelties of its applications. A retrograde attitude no less than an adventurous daring lacks the Catholic trade-mark even though both may happen to be the style of some scholars.

The Church does not expect individual theologians to be infallible but she wants them to be intelligent and discreet. Unfortunately, discretion, which was called the mother of virtues by St. Benedict, is like gold, something that everybody values, but which not everybody has.

It is a serious thing to see how some theologians care much less to learn, that is, to acquire in a scientific way the treasures gathered by the theological discipline, than to build up for themselves with

methods that are purely subjective and more or less arbitrary, fascinated as they are by novelty rather than by truth, and more satisfied with their own work than with the divine gift offered by the Church. They speak of evolution, polygenism, ecumenicalism, and the like, with such a condescending readiness for hypotheses and novelties that are scientifically unchecked, as to be a dishonor to Catholic studies. Their intentions may be honorable, but intentions are not enough in theology. Even in practical life, intentions must be aligned with truth.

Certain theories which, after a false vogue, had disappeared under a general disqualification begin to rise again by the instrumentality of some theologians who grow enthusiastic about them and remain deaf to the authoritative voice of Shepherds and of learned men, a voice raised to disillusion the unwary.

I have known priests who, having returned home after a visit in Rome, where they had occasion to speak with some prelate and even with the Holy Father himself, have broadcast as an approval of their own personal ideas what had been only an encouragement to serious study, to a sincere apostolate, to real merit.

I have read in no less than a diocesan bulletin the statement that we do not know what matter really is, where it differs from life, from the spirit, if such a difference exists!

The call of our Pontiff for a more scientific and less arbitrary study of theology deserved to be heeded better than it has been. The supreme Teacher of Faith had given the warning to all in a most limpid and precise form. Who does not remember the allocution of the Holy Father to the members of the XXIX General Congregation of the Society of Jesus on September 17, 1946, and the other of September 22, of the same year, addressed to the Capitular members of the Order of Preachers in Castel Gandolfo? Those words have lost nothing of their timeliness and efficacy, and no self-respecting theologian, no chancellor, no rector of higher institutions can afford to forget them. If one does not penetrate the intrinsic value of those directives, even from a purely scientific point of view, he gives evidence of his own lack of understanding or of a perfect scientific balance.

Loyality to tradition means exact knowledge of the divine revelation. It means abiding in Christian truth which marks the path for all uprightness and progress. He who is not on solid ground cannot advance, he must get lost. It is, therefore, imperative that

next to biblical exegesis a patristic theology should flourish. This would enrich the student with all the light inherent to the deposit of Catholic doctrine.

The levity of a careless builder does not spell progress. It is not progress to make intemperate assertions that have not been scientifically checked. And yet, these assertions are swallowed as oracles of modern science. Let it be authentic science and true Catholic teaching and harmony will not fail, and the progress will be real.

Any person with a strong and well-balanced mind entering the Vatican Library to see the wonderful scientific monographs, published in the last few years by our major Catholic Universities, if he does not stop at the dry speculation but ascend to the contemplation of truth, will certainly experience one of those intellectual satisfactions that are without equal in this world. One will admire the serene and noble soaring of great minds which, amidst the difficulties of learning and the obscurity of opinions, know how to distinguish between light and darkness, between doubts and certitude, and are able to discover a new heaven that had been left unexplored in the vast sea of reality. And they can tell you in a language that is both clear and modest all that may have been discovered by them, without fear of sound criticism, but ever grateful to the Lord when they have succeeded in flashing a new ray of light throughout the skies of knowledge.

However, great minds are rare things, and our world is not always peopled by giants. Nevertheless, the modest work of many a scholar may have been of greater practical value to mankind than the much praised achievements of great minds. At any rate, it is a great satisfaction to behold the majestic stream of intellectual light that Revelation has opened to the world. Were it not for an infallible Teacher who is there to prevent all the counterfeits of that revealed light, we poor mortals would end up by turning into darkness that very stream of divine light.

Let us then remember that it is human to err and that obstinacy alone is bad. It is interesting to notice how the wise man corrects himself even before the learned one does, and the learned before the common man. The readiness in correcting oneself is then in proportion to the nobility and excellence of one's mind.

Magister Sacri Palatii Apostolici MARIANO CORDOVANI, O.P.
Vatican City

CHRIST THE KING OF CIVIL RULERS

In the period of almost a quarter of a century that has elapsed since Pope Pius XI issued his Encyclical *Quas Primas,* on the Kingship of Christ,[1] many events have demonstrated the wisdom and the opportuneness of that sublime pronouncement. The deplorable state into which the world has fallen today is a striking confirmation of the Pope's statement, in the opening paragraph of the Encyclical:

> We remember that in the first Encyclical which we sent to all the Bishops we clearly signified—when we sought the supreme causes of the calamities by which we saw the human race oppressed and afflicted—not only that this deluge of evils has overwhelmed the earth because many men have excluded Jesus Christ and His most holy law both from their conduct and life and from domestic and public circles, but also that a certain hope of lasting peace will never dawn among people as long as individuals and states deny and renounce the rule of Our Saviour.[2]

In this Encyclical Pope Pius was concerned chiefly with the kingly power of Christ as Man. No Christian could doubt Christ's supreme authority as God; but for centuries controversies had been waged among theologians as to the nature and the extent of His royal authority precisely in His human nature. There were good theologians who denied that Christ as Man possesses direct authority over temporal things and earthly kingdom.[3] But this view is no longer tenable. The Pope asserts quite explicitly: "Hence, it follows, not only that Christ is to be adored as God by angels and men, but also that angels and men are to be obedient and subject to His rule as man." [4]

The Sovereign Pontiff points out the sources of the kingly power of Christ as Man—the hypostatic union and the work of the redemption. Then he explains that the authority of Christ the King embraces a three-fold power, legislative, judiciary and executive. It is chiefly concerned with spiritual things, but the Pope

[1] *AAS,* XVII (1925), 593-610.

[2] *Ibid.,* 593.

[3] Cf. Billuart, *Tractatus de Justitia,* Diss. 3, art. 6.

[4] *AAS,* XVII (1925), 598.

adds: "He would grievously err who would deny to Christ the government of all civil matters, since He receives from the Father the most absolute right over created things in such wise that all things are placed at His disposal." [5] Evidently, then, Christ in His human nature, as well as in His divine nature possesses full authority over the material things of earth. Temporal as well as spiritual power is included in the jurisdiction given Him by His heavenly Father, and of which He said: "All power in heaven and on earth has been given to me." [6]

The question might be asked: Are men bound to obey Christ as man, not only insofar as they are individuals, but also insofar as they are members of a civil society, a state or a nation? In other words, are civil rulers in their official capacity, and not merely as private individuals, obliged to submit to Christ the King? Must they regulate and direct the people subject to them according to the supernatural teachings of the God-Man? And, if there is such an obligation of civic obedience to Christ the King, what particular duties does it impose on those who govern the state or nation?

The question is timely and practical. For, in recent years the view has been proposed that the civil government is purely natural in purpose and in authority, that the civil ruler as such has no direct obligations toward the supernatural law proclaimed by Jesus Christ. This view appears in a recent study of the ecclesiology of John of Paris (+ 1306), by Dom Jean Leclercq, O.S.B.[7] The author states—apparently with a measure of approval—that John of Paris ascribed to the state a purely natural scope, subordinate only to the natural law. He thus summarizes this doctrine, as enunciated in John's work *De Potestate Regia et Papali:*

> The *regnum* is then a strictly natural institution. John of Paris does not deny any of the consequences of this affirmation. Wherever men lived, there they were governed by kings, abstracting from all revelation and from every Christian institution. There were kings in the Old Testament because there was a genuine civil life. There were true kings among the pagans, and even after the coming of Christ all temporal rulers, whether Christian or not, realize the same concept of king. . . . The very character of the king's function assigns limits to his power. Destined by God to procure the common temporal good

[5] *Ibid.*, 600. [6] Matt., 28:18.

[7] *Jean de Paris et l'Ecclésiologie du XIII siècle* (Paris, 1942).

according to the inclination of nature, the king is bound to forbid all that is opposed to it. The norm of his actions is the natural law.[8]

The practical applications of such a view are indeed far-reaching.[9] It would mean that a civil ruler, even if he is governing a predominantly Catholic people, would not be bound to manifest officially any special homage to Christianity or to the Church. In his official capacity he would not be bound to respect any laws which Christ proclaimed over and above the natural law. He would not be permitted in conscience to restrict heretical activities or attacks on the Church, unless they recommend something opposed to the natural law, such as polygamy or free love or human sacrifice. Apart from such a case, he would be bound to give the same favor to heretical denominations as to the Catholic Church, for he would not be permitted to investigate officially the claims of the Catholic Church and acknowledge it as the one true church of God.

A Catholic who would accept this view could have a ready answer to those who bring up the discrimination and restrictive measures still employed by some governments in Catholic lands against Protestant missionary efforts, as in Spain and in some South American countries. He could condemn the atttiude of these governments as an outmoded interpretation of the relation which should exist between Church and state, and emphatically declare that learned Catholics, particularly in the United States, disclaim it. For, he would declare in pursuance of his accepted principle, even the government of a predominantly Catholic land must abstain from passing judgment on the merits of religions that claim to be based on revelation, and may not curtail the activities of the various denominations unless they are harmful to public order and morality as prescribed by the natural law.

However, it is very difficult to see how this opinion can be reconciled with the traditional doctrine of the Catholic Church, that governments, through the rulers, must acknowledge the sovereign dominion of the God-Man, Jesus Christ, and obey and protect His law. No clearer statement of the obligation of civil

[8] *Ibid.*, pp. 94-96.

[9] I am not concerned with the accuracy of Dom Leclercq's interpretation of the views of John of Paris, though I am inclined to believe that objections could be raised to certain features of it. I am merely discussing the theory he ascribes to John.

rulers to Christ the King could be found than that proclaimed by Pope Pius XI:

> Nor is there any difference in this matter between individuals and societies, both domestic and civil, for men joined in society are no less under the power of Christ than individuals. . . . Therefore, let the rulers of nations not refuse to fulfill by themselves and through their people the public duty of reverence and homage, if they wish to promote and to augment the prosperity of their country, while preserving uninjured their authority.[10]

It should be noted that these words definitely exclude any objection to the effect that the obedience to Christ demanded of civil governments means merely obedience to the natural law of which Christ, as God, is the author. In this passage the Pope is clearly speaking of Christ as Man, and the law which Christ in His human nature proclaimed was certainly a positive, supernatural law, exceeding the demands of the natural law. It should be noted that just previous to this paragraph the Pope had stated, quoting Pope Leo XIII,[11] that not only Catholics are under the dominion of Christ, but even the unbaptized, so that the whole human race is under the power of Jesus Christ. This statement emphasizes the difference between the authority of the Catholic Church, which extends only to the baptized, and the authority of Christ the King, which embraces all mankind.

The doctrine of the Kingship of Christ is therefore not to be confounded with the doctrine of the relation between Church and State. In the course of the centuries there have been many discussions on this latter subject, and many varied views proposed. The medieval view that the Pope has direct jurisdiction over all civil governments is now abandoned. The principle that the Roman Pontiff possesses indirect jurisdiction is certainly to be admitted, but it is not interpreted by all in the same way. But the doctrine that organized civil society, as well as every individual, is subject to the positive supernatural law of Christ as Man must be maintained in view of the clear pronouncements of the Pope. Even if Our Lord had not consigned His religion to a Church, authorized by Him to incorporate all men into its membership, He would still be a King of all men and of all nations. In the words of St. John, Christ is "the ruler of the kings of the earth." [12]

[10] *AAS*, XVII (1925), 601.

[11] Enc. *Annum sacrum*, 25 May, 1899.

[12] Apoc., 1:15.

To avoid difficulties based on the accepted doctrine as to the end of civil society, we must distinguish carefully between the *natural* good of the citizens and their *temporal* good. The two terms are by no means synonymous. The direct purpose of civil society is, indeed, to promote the common *temporal* good—that is, the good of the citizens in the present life. But in view of the elevation of all men to the supernatural order, their temporal good embraces the practice of the supernatural virtues, as well as of the natural virtues. Hence, to promote the welfare of its citizens, a government must concern itself with their observance of the supernatural law of Christ as well as of the natural law.

The doctrine just set forth is excellently synthesized by Bishop Wright, of Boston:

> By the promulgation of the social rights of Christ the King the Holy See has proclaimed the existence of a single radical sovereignty in the temporal as well as spiritual order, a sovereignty resident in a single transcendental authority to which not merely individuals destined for an end in the *al di la,* but even societies, functioning purely in the *al di qua,* and with their final causes strictly temporal, must be subject.[13]

Bishop Wright goes on to confirm these statements by a quotation from the Encyclical *Tametsi futura prospicientibus* of Pope Leo XIII,[14] in which the same doctrine is proposed that was later asserted in the *Quas Primas* concerning the headship of Christ over social groups as well as over individuals.

How is this doctrine to be applied in practice? Of course, in the concrete, the particular circumstances of time and place can greatly modify and restrict the manner and measure of the homage and obedience that a government can and should manifest to Christ the King. But here we are concerned with what *per se* is required for the fulfilment of this obligation. It is quite evident that, although "men joined in society are no less under the power of Christ than individuals," as Pope Pius XI expressed it, the parallel between personal and civic duties cannot be followed out in every respect. A government cannot be baptized, nor is it liable to eternal pun-

[13] John J. Wright, *National Patriotism in Papal Teaching* (Boston, 1942), 254.

[14] *Acta Leonis,* XX, 304-305.

ishment. On the other hand, a government through its lawful rulers can express homage, it can adapt its legislation to the moral principles laid down by the Son of God. However, in its supervision and regulation of the conduct of its citizens in relation to the law of Christ, the state must confine itself to matters that affect the common good.

The government has the obligation to express in some public manner its dependence on God and on Jesus Christ. A beautiful example of such an acknowledgment is found in the opening paragraph of the Constitution of Ireland: "In the name of the Most Holy Trinity, from whom is all authority and to whom, as our final end, all actions, both of men and states must be referred, we, the people of Eire, humbly acknowledging all our obligations to our Divine Lord, Jesus Christ, etc." Furthermore, at least occasionally there should be religious ceremonies at which the rulers will assist in their official capacity. These ceremonies should be in conformity with the belief and worship of the Catholic Church. As Pope Leo XIII expressed it:

> It is a sin in the state not to have care for religion, as something beyond its scope, or as of no practical benefit; or out of many forms of religion to adopt that one which chimes in with the fancy; for we are bound absolutely to worship God in that way which He has shown to be His will.[15]

The civil rulers have the obligation to permit the Catholic Church to teach its doctrines to the people, whether baptized or unbaptized. In the event that the Gospel is being announced for the first time, the rulers have the right and the duty to investigate the claims of the preachers before giving positive approval. Since the Church received her commission to preach directly from Christ Himself, she has the right to announce her message in non-Christian lands whether the government consents or not. However, the usual procedure of missionaries to pagan lands has been to seek governmental confirmation of their mission, when it is prudently possible to follow this procedure.

The state is bound to promote religion. To quote Pope Leo XIII again:

> All who rule should hold in honor the holy name of God, and one of their chief duties must be to favor religion, to protect it, to shield it

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[15] Encyc. *Immortale Dei, ASS,* XVIII (1885), 163.

under the credit and sanction of the laws, and neither to organize nor enact any measure that may compromise its safety. This is the bounden duty of rulers to the people over whom they rule. . . . Wherefore, care must especially be taken to preserve unharmed and unimpeded religion, the practice of which is the link connecting man with his God.[16]

However, the civil rulers have no right to force their subjects to embrace Christianity or to enter the Catholic Church. Pope Leo XIII enunciates the principle: "The Catholic Church is wont to take great care that no one shall be forced to believe unwillingly." [17] That some medieval princes transgressed this rule cannot be doubted; but their method was not in accordance with genuine Catholic principles. Similarly, the civil rulers should not prevent the *private* exercise of false religious cults, when no harm is thereby done to the public welfare. But it is fully within their right to restrict and to prevent public functions and activities of false religions which are likely to be detrimental to the spiritual welfare of the Catholic citizens or insulting to the true religion of Christ. Nowadays, it is true, greater evils would often follow such a governmental course of action than would ensue if complete tolerance were granted; but the principle is immutable. It is the same principle that our government employs when it prohibits the preaching of ideologies destructive of our constitution, however sincere may be those who proclaim them.

It is especially in the realm of marriage that the obligation of the civil government to uphold the law of Christ is manifested, more particularly with reference to the granting of divorces. Some theologians have believed that in certain circumstances, as far as the natural law alone is concerned, a divorce *a vinculo* with the authorization of the civil power would be permissible.[18] But, whatever may be said of this opinion, it is certain that by the positive law of Christ the civil authority now possesses no power to grant any couple a divorce with the right to remarry.[19] The rulers of a nation are obliged to recognize this fact, and realize that under no circumstances may they positively grant a citizen the permission to marry again as long as his legitimate spouse is living.

[16] *Ibid.*, 164.

[17] *Ibid.*, 174.

[18] G. Joyce, *Christian Marriage* (New York, 1933), 30.

[19] Cf. Gasparri, *De Matrimonio* (Rome, 1923), II, n. 1136.

However, in certain circumstances a Catholic ruler could *tolerate* a marriage custom at variance with the law of Christ. Several instances are on record within recent centuries when the Pope, as civil ruler, tolerated the remarriage of a Jew, while his wife was still living, in accordance with the custom of his people, in order that he might have offspring.[20]

On the other hand, since the bond of marriage can be broken under the Christian dispensation in certain extraordinary circumstances, with the authorization or dispensation of the Church as in the case of the Pauline privilege and *matrimonium ratum non consummatum,* the civil authorities are bound to recognize these exceptions as lawful, and to abstain from inflicting any penalties on those receiving such concessions. This, too, is a duty of the state toward Christ, since it is through His authority that these exceptions are authorized or granted by the Church. Similarly, the government is bound to recognize the exclusive right of the Catholic Church to establish impediments for the marriages of baptized persons.[21] Although the actual institution of a matrimonial impediment is an act of jurisdiction on the part of the Church, yet the authority to make impediments comes from Christ Himself. For it was He who established the contract of Christian marriage as a sacrament, and by that very fact deputed the Church to exercise authority over the conditions required for the lawful and valid entrance into Christian marriage.

If the state were regulated only by the natural law, many strange incongruities would arise in connection with marriage. The state would be justified in making impediments for the baptized and could disregard those made by the Church. Thus we should have the baffling paradox of a person permitted to marry by the supernatural authority of the Church and forbidden to marry by the natural authority of the state—God being the source of both types of authority! Again, under a civil government which protects the natural indissolubility of marriage by stringent anti-divorce laws, the state as the representative of God would be obliged to reject the validity of a Pauline privilege which the Church would grant as the representative of the Son of God!

Sometimes the argument is raised that the Popes in recent

[20] Cf. M. Rosset, *De Sacramento Matrimonii* (S. Jean de Maurienne, 1895), I, 521.

[21] Can. 1038, §2.

times, when delivering exhortations to the civil rulers of the world have referred only to obligations of natural law, from which we may conclude that these represent the whole duty of those in civil authority. But the answer is simple. The Popes are well aware that in view of the tragic neglect of the moral law that characterizes the activities of governments today, there would be a great improvement of conditions if civil rulers could be induced to obey even the natural law. It should be noted, too, that when the opportunity presents itself the Popes have not failed to indicate that the law of Christ binds those in posts of civil authority. Thus, Pope Pius XII, in his Encyclical *Summi Pontificatus,* asserted: "In the recognition of the royal prerogatives of Christ and in the return of individuals *and of society* to the law of His truth and His love lies the only way to salvation."[22] Again, at the consecration of twelve missionary bishops on October 29, 1939, the Holy Father stated: "Most happy are those states that establish laws inspired by the doctrine of the Gospel, and do not refuse to render public homage to the majesty of Christ, the King."[23]

No one can be so optimistic as to believe that the ideal of a Christian state is going to spread throughout the world in the near future, apart from the extraordinary intervention of Divine Providence. Yet, that should not prevent Catholics from proclaiming unhesitatingly the absolute necessity of a return to Christ on the part of governments as well as of individuals, if there is to be any lasting peace in the world. This was the message of Pope Pius XI, at the beginning of his pontificate: "True peace, the peace of Christ, is impossible unless we are willing and ready to accept the fundamental principles of Christianity, unless we are willing to observe the teachings and laws of Christ, both in public and private life."[24] We must not compromise with the spirit of the times so far as to admit that the state is bound only by the natural law. We must unhesitatingly proclaim that the state cannot attain its destiny, save through Christ the King, even though that destiny is temporal, not eternal happiness. The words of the *Quas Primas* should be our unhesitating message to the harassed and unhappy world of today:

[22] Encyc. *Summi Pontificatus,* AAS, XXXI (1939), 420.
[23] Hom. *Audistis,* AAS, XXXI (1939), 596.
[24] Encyc. *Ubi Arcano Dei,* AAS, XIV (1922), 690.

When once men recognize, both in private and in public life that Christ is King, society will at last receive the great blessings of real liberty, well-ordered discipline, peace and harmony. Our Lord's regal office invests the human authority of princes and rulers with a religious significance; it ennobles the citizen's duty of obedience. . . . If princes and magistrates duly elected are filled with the persuasion that they rule, not by their own right but by the mandate and in the place of the Divine King, they will exercise their authority piously and wisely; they will make laws and administer them, having in view the common good and also the human dignity of their subjects. The result will be order, peace and tranquility, for there will be no longer any cause of discontent. Men will see in their king or in their rulers men like themselves, perhaps unworthy or open to criticism, but they will not on that account refuse obedience if they see reflected in them the authority of Christ, God and Man.[25]

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[25] Encyc. *Quas Primas, AAS,* VII (1925), 601.

CAUSA NOSTRAE LAETITIAE

Mary at her birth was not only an object of delight in the eyes of God, and of admiration to the angels, but she was also a cause of joy to the whole world.

—Fr. Nicholas O'Rafferty, in *Discourses on Our Lady* (Milwaukee: Bruce, 1948), p. 20.

THE TIMELINESS OF THOMISM

In order to avoid the errors which are the primary source of all the evils of our times, it is necessary religiously to hold fast, now as never before, to the teachings of the Angelic Doctor. He has given us a complete refutation of the erroneous views of the Modernists. As regards philosophy, he has defended, as we have already seen, the value and power of human reason and has proven by unquestionably valid arguments the existence of God. As regards dogmatic theology, he has clearly dist nguished the supernatural from the natural order and has placed in bold relief both the reasons for faith and the nature of Christian dogmas. In the field of pure theology he has shown that the articles of Faith are based not on mere opinion but on truth itself and are, therefore, unchangeable.

—Pope Pius XI, in the Encyclical, *Studiorum ducem,* issues June 29, 1923.

THE MOTHER OF ST. AUGUSTINE

The works of St. Augustine furnish materials for the biography of several persons with whom he was closely associated. High on the list of such persons stands his saintly mother, Monnica,[1] of whom he says: "But I will not omit anything my mind brings forth concerning her, Your servant, who brought me forth—brought me forth in the flesh to this temporal light, and in her heart to light eternal."[2] And: ". . . mother, to whose merit I believe is due all that I am."[3]

Although many details of her life can not be supplied by the sources,[4] we are still able to obtain a good idea of what was most important—her lovely character. This developed through the years, as we shall see; and her son's immortal pen makes it possible for us to penetrate the veil of fifteen centuries or more to recover some

[1] The name is so spelt on the evidence of the oldest manuscripts of the writings of St. Augustine. Cf. H. C. G. Moule, "Monnica, St.", *Dictionary of Christian Biography*, III (London 1882), 932.

[2] *Confessions*, 9, 8, 17, translated by F. J. Sheed, *The Confessions of St. Augustine* (New York: Sheed and Ward, 1943). All references to the *Confessions* are here cited according to this translation.

[3] *De beata vita* 6, translated by Ruth Allison Brown, *S. Aurelii Augustini De beata vita, A Translation with an Introduction and Commentary* (Washington, D. C., 1944); p. 69. All references to the *De beata vita* are here cited according to this translation.

[4] Dom Henri Leclercq, "Monique (Sainte)", *Dictionnaire d'archéologie chrétienne et de liturgie*, 11, 2 (Paris, 1934) 2233-34, states: "The little that we know about the admirable woman has been taught to us by her son in several pages scattered amidst the Confessions, pages more instructive in their brevity than the lengthy and saccharine tales sheltered under pretended liturgical traditions of which not a single point can be maintained. When a creature has had the happiness of finding a biographer of the quality of St. Augustine, historians need look for no other" (translation mine). A few other works of St. Augustine are also useful for information. M. l'Abbé Bougaud is far less critical than Dom Leclercq in his *History of St. Monica* (translated from the French by Rev. Anthony Farley [New York, 1885]). His work tells us (p. 382): "Happily, tradition has supplied the void, in acquainting us with a certain number of most interesting facts which reveal St. Monica's character most distinctly." Winfried Hümpfner, O.S.A. gives a select modern bibliography in his article, "Monika", *Lexikon für Theologie und Kirche*, 7 (Freiburg, 1935) 275-76.

of her outstanding traits. The few pages here devoted to her will be taken almost exclusively from Augustine himself. He will tell his mother's story. Little added commentary is needed.

A sketch of her life, bringing out the development of this lovable character, can be given under several headings which, of course, need not be mutually exclusive. They will deal with Monnica as: child, wife, widow, mother, Christian sage, and dying Christian. Then a few words can be added about the subsequent history of our saint.

THE CHILD

We have no proof of the place where Monnica was born. Tagaste has been assumed in the absence of indications to the contrary. We are better informed as to the time. Since Augustine's mother was about twenty-three years old when she gave him birth (Nov. 13, 354), she was born probably between November, 331, and November, 332. The names of her parents are not known. It is certain, however, that they were Catholics and had remained loyal to the Church in spite of the many attacks against it, especially by the Donatists: "It was the scepter of Your Christ, the discipline of Your Only-Begotten, that brought her up in holy fear, in a Catholic family which was a worthy member of Your church."[5] Though we are not certain that she was baptized as an infant, we do know that she received the sacrament of regeneration many years before her death, and that she led a life thereafter in strict conformity with her baptismal vows:

> For though she had been made alive in Christ, and while still in the body had so lived that Your name was glorified in her faith and her character, yet I dare not say that from the moment of her regeneration in baptism no word issued from her mouth contrary to Your command. . . .
>
> . . . do Thou also forgive such trespasses as she may have been guilty of in all the years since her baptism, forgive them, Lord, forgive them, I beseech Thee: enter not in judgment with her.[6]

It was not her mother who gave her most of her training in early girlhood, but rather an elderly maidservant. This maid lived so exemplary a life that Monnica and her sisters were placed directly under her conscientious charge:

[5] *Confessions*, 9, 8, 17 (Sheed, p. 195). [6] *Ibid.*, 9, 13, 34 (Sheed, p. 206).

Yet it was not the devotion of her mother in her upbringing that she talked most of, but of a certain aged servant, who had indeed carried my mother's father on her back when he was a baby, as little ones are accustomed to be carried on the backs of older girls. Because of this, because also of her age and her admirable character, she was very much respected by her master and mistress in their Christian household. As a result she was given charge of her master's daughters. This charge she fulfilled most conscientiously, checking them sharply when necessary with holy severity and teaching them soberly and prudently. Thus, except at the times when they ate—and that most temperately—at their parents' table, she would not let them even drink water, no matter how tormenting their thirst. By this she prevented the forming of a bad habit, and she used to remark very sensibly: "Now you drink water because you are not allowed to have wine; but when you are married, and thus mistresses of food-stores and wine-cellars, you will despise water, but the habit of drinking will still remain." By this kind of teaching and the authority of her commands she moderated the greediness that goes with childhood and brought the little girls' thirst to such a control that they no longer wanted what they ought not to have.[7]

In spite of such careful upbringing, it could and did happen that the youthful Monnica contracted a bad habit that might have had serious consequences. Here is her son's account of the habit's formation, development, and correction:

Yet, as Your servant told me, her son, there did steal upon my mother an inclination to wine. For when, in the usual way, she was sent by her parents, as a well-behaved child, to draw wine from the barrel, she would dip the cup in, but before pouring the wine from the cup into the flagon, she would sip a little with the very tip of her lips, only a little because she did not yet like the taste sufficiently to take more. Indeed she did it not out of any craving for wine, but rather from the excess of childhood's high spirits, which tend to boil over in absurdities, and are usually kept in check by the authority of elders. And so, adding to that daily drop a little more from day to day—for he that despises small things, falls little by little—she fell into the habit, so that she would drink off greedily cups almost full of wine. Where then was that wise old woman with her forceful prohibitions? Could anything avail against the evil in us, unless Your healing, O Lord, watched over us? . . . What did you do then, O my God? How did You cure her, and bring her to health? From another soul you drew a harsh and cutting sarcasm, as though bringing forth a surgeon's knife from

[7] *Ibid.*, 9, 8, 17 (Sheed, p. 195).

Your secret store, and with one blow amputated that sore place. A maidservant with whom she was accustomed to go to the cellar, one day fell into a quarrel with her small mistress when no one else chanced to be about, and hurled at her the most biting insult possible, calling her a drunkard. My mother was pierced to the quick, saw her fault in its true wickedness, and instantly condemned it and gave it up. Just as the flattery of a friend can pervert, so the insult of an enemy can sometimes correct.[8]

This very human story is but one more indication that the saints have human weaknesses to overcome, just as other mortals do. Monnica's girlhood had shadows to make the brilliance of her later life even brighter by comparison. But on the whole, even her girlhood was marked by the goodness becoming her state: "My mother, then, was modestly and soberly brought up, being rather made obedient to her parents by You than to You by her parents. . . ."[9]

THE WIFE

Girls were married young in antiquity. Marriage of a maid of fourteen was by no means surprising. In due time, Monnica was given in marriage to the man agreed upon, a pagan, named Patricius, "a poor citizen of Tagaste."[10] Possidius, the biographer of St. Augustine, tells us that he was a member of the local curia.[11]

Though Monnica received for husband a pagan whose life was anything but exemplary, she managed to overcome the many obstacles to a happy wedded life. Yes, she was able even to supply object lessons for marital happiness to her female acquaintances who were less blessed than she:

When she reached the age for marriage, and was bestowed upon a husband, she served him as her lord. She used all her effort to win him to You, preaching You to him by her character, by which You made her beautiful to her husband, respected and loved by him and admirable in his sight. For she bore his acts of unfaithfulness quietly, and never had any jealous scene with her husband about them. She awaited Your mercy upon him, that he might grow chaste through faith in You. And as a matter of fact, though generous beyond measure, he had a very hot temper. But she knew that a woman must not resist a husband in anger, by deed or even by word. Only,

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[8] *Ibid.*, 9, 8, 18 (Sheed, pp. 195 f.).

[9] *Ibid.*, 9, 9, 19 (Sheed, p. 197).

[10] *Ibid.*, 2, 3, 5 (Sheed, p. 29).

[11] *Vita Sancti Augustini*, 1.

when she saw him calm again and quiet, she would take the opportunity to give him an explanation of her actions, if it happened that he had been roused to anger unreasonably. The result was that whereas many matrons with much milder husbands carried the marks of blows to disfigure their faces, and would all get together to complain of the way their husbands behaved, my mother—talking lightly but meaning it seriously—advised them against their tongues; saying that from the day they heard the matrimonial contract read to them they should regard it as an instrument by which they became servants; and from that time they should be mindful of their condition and not set themselves up against their masters. And they often expressed amazement—for they knew how violent a husband she had to live with—that it had never been heard, and there was no mark to show, that Patricius had beaten his wife or that there had been any family quarrel between them for so much as a single day. And when her friends asked her the reason, she taught them her rule, which was as I have just said. Those who followed it, found it good and thanked her; those who did not, went on being bullied and beaten.[12]

She constantly served her unlovely husband to gain him for the true religion: ". . . with Your aid she overcame her husband, in her greater virtue serving him because in serving him she served Your command likewise." [13]

Does it seem surprising that such a wife could conquer by her goodness, where harshness could only have alienated? About the year 369, Patricius was enrolled as a catechumen: ". . . in my mother's breast You had already laid the foundation of Your temple and begun Your holy habitation: whereas my father was still only a catechumen, and a new catechumen at that."[14] His baptism and amendment were her next reward: "The upshot was that towards the very end of his life she won her husband to You: and once he was a Christian she no longer had to complain of the things she had had to bear with before he was a Christian."[15]

He died in 371. Before his death, Monnica was confronted with the eternally vexing problem for young wives—trouble with her mother-in-law. Over this trial also her virtue scored a complete victory:

[12] *Confessions,* 9, 9, 19 (Sheed, pp. 197 f.).
[13] *Ibid.,* 1, 11, 17 (Sheed, p. 14).
[14] *Ibid.,* 2, 3, 6 (Sheed, p. 30).
[15] *Ibid.,* 9, 9, 22 (Sheed, p. 199).

Her mother-in-law began by being angry with her because of her whispers of malicious servants. But my mother won her completely by the respect she showed, and her unfailing patience and mildness. She ended by going to her son, telling him of the tales the servants had bandied about to the destruction of peace in the family between herself and her daughter-in-law, and asking him to punish them for it. So he, out of obedience to his mother and in the interests of order in the household and peace among his womenfolk, had the servants beaten whose names he had been given, as she had asked when giving them. To which she added the promise that anyone must expect a similar reward from her own hands who should think to please her by speaking ill of her daughter-in-law. And as no one had the courage to do so, they lived together with the most notable degree of kindness and harmony.[16]

It can be seen that Monnica was a constant peacemaker. She exercised constantly her influence for good. Tale-bearing had no place in her life:

This great gift also, O my God, my Mercy, You gave to Your good servant, in whose womb You created me, that she showed herself, wherever possible, a peacemaker between people quarreling and minds at discord. For swelling and undigested discord often belches forth bitter words when in the venom of intimate conversation with a present friend hatred at its rawest is breathed out upon an absent enemy. But when my mother heard bitter things said by each of the other, she never said anything to either about the other save what would help to reconcile them. This might seem a small virtue, if I had not had the sorrow of seeing for myself so many people who—as if by some horrible widespreading infection of sin—not only tell angry people the things their enemies said in anger, but even add things that were not said at all. Whereas, on the contrary, ordinary humanity would seem to require not merely that we refrain from exciting or increasing wrath among men by evil speaking, but that we studied to extinguish wrath by kind speaking. Such a one was she; and You were the master who taught her most secretly in the school of her heart.[17]

THE WIDOW

St. Paul in his First Epistle to Timothy (5:5) had said: "she who is truly a widow, and left solitary, has set her hope on God and continues in supplication and prayers night and day." Monnica

[16] *Ibid.*, 9, 9, 20 (Sheed, p. 198). [17] *Ibid.*, 9, 9, 21 (Sheed, pp. 198 f.).

as a widow lived up to these requirements. Her son, paraphrasing the Apostle, could say of her:

> She had been the *wife of one husband, had requited her parents, had governed her house* piously, *was well reported of for good works. She had brought up her children,* being in labor of them as often as she saw them swerving away from You.[18]
>
> So let her rest in peace, together with her husband, for she had no other before nor after him, but served him, in patience bringing forth fruit for Thee, and winning him like myself for Thee.[19]

She tried to help her son continue his education, probably at great financial sacrifice: "My father was now dead two years; I was eighteen and was receiving money from my mother for the continuance of my study of eloquence." [20]

Almsgiving, service to others, and prayer in the church were important items in her daily routine:

> But would You, O God of mercy, despise the contrite and humble heart of that chaste and pious widow, so generous in alms-giving, so ready in the service of Your saints, who let no day pass without attending the sacrifice at Your altar, and came twice a day with never an exception, morning and evening, to Your church, not to listen to idle tales and the gossip of the women but that she might hear You in Your discourses, and You her in her prayers?[21]

This habit of frequent prayer did not keep her from being the loving servant of her son and his friends:

> Finally of all of us Your servants, O Lord—since by Your gift You suffer us to speak—who before her death were living together after receiving the grace of baptism, she took as much care as if she had been the mother of us all, and served us as if she had been the daughter of us all.[22]

Hers was not the piety that stubbornly refuses to heed the direction of higher authority. At Milan she gave up her long-

[18] *Ibid.*, 9, 9, 22 (Sheed, p. 199).

[19] *Ibid.*, 9, 13, 37 (Sheed, p. 207).

[20] *Ibid.*, 3, 4, 7 (Sheed, p. 45).

[21] *Ibid.*, 5, 9, 17 (Sheed, p. 95). The translation here is unsatisfactory. The words "without attending the service at Your Altar" should read "without making an offering at Your altar." This refers to the bread and wine offered by the faithful for use in the Holy Eucharist. Cf. St. Augustine's *Letter*, 111, 8.

[22] *Confessions*, 9, 9, 22 (Sheed, p. 199).

standing pious custom to which she had become attached before coming to Italy:

My mother had brought meal and bread and wine to certain oratories built to the memory of saints, as was her custom in Africa. But the sacristan prevented her. When she learned that the bishop himself had forbidden the practice, she received the prohibition so devoutly and obediently that I wondered at the ease with which she turned into a critic of her own former custom rather than of the present prohibition. For her soul was not a slave to wine-drinking, nor had she any love of wine to provoke her to hatred of the truth, like so many of both sexes who are as much sickened by a hymn of sobriety as drunkards would be if one poured water into their wine. But when my mother brought her basket with those accustomed dainties—of which she meant to eat a little and give away the rest—she never allowed her self more than one small cup diluted to her sober palate, and from this she would sip no more than was fitting. And if there were many oratories of departed saints to be honoured in that way, she took around with her the same cup to be used in each place: and this, not only diluted with water, but by now lukewarm, she would share with others present in small sips, for her concern was with piety and not with the pleasure of the wine.

But when she found that the custom was forbidden by so famous a preacher and so pious a bishop even to those who used it soberly, lest it might be an occasion of gluttony to the heavier drinkers; and because in any event these funeral feasts in honour of our parents in the faith were too much like the superstitions of the heathens, she abandoned the practice quite willingly. In place of her basket filled with the fruits of the earth, she learned to offer at the shrines of the martyrs a breast full of prayers purer than any such gifts. Thus she was able to give what she could to the needy; and the communion of the Lord's Body was celebrated where the martyrs had been immolated and crowned in the likeness of His Passion.[23]

Her devoted attachment to the Bishop, St. Ambrose, who, in turn, greatly admired her, made this particular sacrifice much easier for her:

But yet, O Lord my God, it does seem to me—and upon this matter my heart is in Your sight—that my mother might not so easily have borne the breaking of her custom if it had been forbidden by some other whom she did not love as she loved Ambrose. For on account of my salvation she loved him dearly; and he loved her on account of her most religious way of life, for she was fervent in spirit and ever doing

[23] *Ibid.*, 6, 2, 2 (Sheed, pp. 106 f.).

good, and she haunted the church. So that when he saw me he often broke out in her praises, congratulating me that I had such a mother, and not realizing what sort of a son she had: for I doubted all these things and did not believe that the way of life could be discovered.[24]

On another occasion, Monnica had occasion to consult Ambrose on the question of fasting. This time also she deferred to the judgment of her ecclesiastical superior:

I will tell you the answer given to my questions on this subject by the venerable Ambrose Bishop of Milan, by whom I was baptized. When my mother was with me in that city, I, as being only a catechumen, felt no concern about these questions; but it was to her a question causing anxiety, whether she ought, after the custom of our own town, to fast on the Saturday, or, after the custom of the Church of Milan, not to fast. To deliver her from perplexity, I put the question to the man of God whom I have just named. He answered, "What else can I recommend to others than what I do myself?" When I thought that by this he intended simply to prescribe to me that we should take food on Saturdays—for I knew this to be his own practice—he, following me, added these words: "When I am here I do not fast on Saturday; but when I am at Rome I do; whatever church you may come to, conform to its custom, if you would avoid either receiving or giving offence." This reply I reported to my mother, and it satisfied her, so that she scrupled not to comply with it; and I have myself followed the same rule.[25]

So faithful was the holy widow to the saintly bishop and his cause that she joined the congregation that remained with him in the church at Milan, ready to die for the orthodox faith. It is interesting to note that she thereby belonged to the first Latin congregation to promote antiphonal singing in church:

. . . the church of Milan had begun to practise this kind of consolation and exultation, to the great joy of the brethren singing together with heart and voice. For it was only about a year, or not much more, since Justina, the mother of the boy emperor Valentinian, was persecuting Your servant Ambrose in the interests of her own heresy: for she had been seduced by the Arians. The devoted people had stayed day and night in the church, ready to die with their bishop, Your servant.

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[24] *Ibid.*, 6, 2, 2 (Sheed, p. 107).

[25] *Letter* 36, 32 of St. Augustine, translated by J. G. Cunningham (Edinburgh, 1872) p. 125. Cf. also *Letter* 54, 3 (Cunningham, p. 198).

And my mother, Your handmaid, bearing a great part of the trouble and vigil, had lived in prayer. I also, though still not warmed by the fire of Your Spirit, was stirred to excitement by the disturbed and wrought-up state of the city. It was at this time that the practice was insituted of singing hymns and psalms after the manner of the Eastern churches, to keep the people from being altogether worn out with anxiety and want of sleep. The custom has been retained from that day to this, and has been imitated by many, indeed in almost all congregations throughout the world.[26]

THE MOTHER

Monnica was the mother of at least three children: one was the son, Navigius; another was the daughter, whose name has been preserved in traditon as Perpetua; the third, Augustine, completely overshadows the other two children. What Augustine says of his mother with regard to himself must have been true in many instances with regard to the other children also of his family. But everything that Augustine's works tell us in this connection nearly invariably concerns only himself immediately. Hence, what we say here about Monnica as a mother must be to some extent an outline—albeit incomplete—of the early life of Augustine.

Monnica raised all her children as believers in Christ. In Augustine's case at least she did not have infant baptism conferred, for the reason mentioned immediately below. He was, however, enrolled as a catechumen:

Even as a boy, of course, I had heard of an eternal life promised because the Lord our God had come down in His humility upon our pride. And I was signed with the sign of His Cross and seasoned with His salt as I came new from the womb of my mother, who had great trust in You. When I was still a child, I fell gravely ill with some abdominal trouble and was close to death. You saw, Lord—for you were even then guarding me—with what earnest faith I besought the piety of my own mother, and of the Church which is the mother of us all, that I might receive the baptism of Your Christ, my Lord and my God. The mother of my flesh was in heavy anxiety, since with a heart chaste in Your Faith she was ever in deep travail for my eternal salvation, and would have proceeded without delay to have me consecrated and washed clean by the Sacrament of salvation, while I confessed You, Lord Jesus, unto the remission of sins; but I made a sudden

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[26] *Confessions*, 9, 7, 15 (Sheed, p. 193).

recovery. This caused my baptismal cleansing to be postponed: for it was argued that if I lived I should inevitably fall again into the filth of sin: and after baptism the guilt of sin's defilement would be in itself graver and put the soul in greater peril. I then believed, as did my mother and all our household, except my father; yet he did not prevail over the hold my mother's piety had upon me, to lead me not to believe in Christ, because he did not as yet. She used all her endeavor, O God, that I should hold you for my father rather than him . . .[27]

So great a love for the Saviour did Monnica inspire into her children that Augustine, even in his youthful exuberance over the *Hortensius* of Cicero, found it incomplete since the name of Christ was lacking:

But the one thing that delighted me in Cicero's exhortation was that I should love, and seek, and win, and hold, and embrace, not this or that philosophical school but Wisdom itself, whatever it might be. The book excited and inflamed me; in my ardour the only thing I found lacking was that the name of Christ was not there. For with my mother's milk my infant heart had drunk in, and still held deep down in it, that name according to Your mercy, O Lord, the name of Your Son, my Saviour; and whatever lacked that name, no matter how learned and excellently written and true, could not win me wholly.[28]

Though Augustine's pagan father had but a slight regard for the virtue of chastity, his mother regarded it very highly:

I have dared to say that You were silent, my God, when I went afar from You. But was it truly so? Whose but Yours were the words You dinned into my ears through the voice of my mother, Your faithful servant? Not that at that time any of it sank into my heart to make me do it. I still remember her anxiety and how earnestly she urged upon me not to sin with women, above all not with any man's wife. All this sounded to me womanish and I should have blushed to obey. Yet it was from You, though I did not know it and thought that You were silent and she speaking: whereas You were speaking to me through her, and in ignoring her I was ignoring You: I, her son, the son of Your handmaid, Your servant.[29]

When Augustine fell into the error of the Manichaeans, his mother made it her earnest task, by her efforts over nine years, to restore him to the true faith:

[27] *Ibid.*, 1, 11, 17 (Sheed, p. 14).
[28] *Ibid.*, 3, 4, 8 (Sheed, p. 46).
[29] *Ibid.*, 2, 3, 7 (Sheed, p. 30).

And You sent Your hand from above, and raised my soul out of that depth of darkness, because my mother, Your faithful one, wept to You for me more bitterly than mothers weep for the bodily deaths of their children. For by the faith and the spirit which she had from You, she saw me as dead; and You heard her, Lord. You heard her and did not despise her tears when they flowed down and watered the earth against which she pressed her face whenever You heard her. What else could have been the cause of that dream by which You so comforted her that she consented to live with me and to eat at the same table in the house: which previously she had refused to do, because she shunned and detested the blasphemies of my error. In her dream she saw herself standing on a wooden rule and a youth all radiant coming to her cheerful and smiling upon her, whereas she was grieving and heavy with her grief. He asked her—not to learn from her but, as is the way of visions, to teach her—the causes of her sorrow and the tears she daily shed. She replied that she was mourning for the loss of my soul. He commanded her to be at peace and told her to observe carefully and she would see that where she was, there was I also. She looked, and saw me standing alongside her on the same rule. How should she have this dream unless Your ears had heard her heart, O Good Omnipotent, You who have such care for each one of us as if You had care for him alone, and such care for all as if we were all but one person?

And the same must have been the reason for this too: that when she had told me her vision and I tried to interpret it to mean that she must not despair of one day being as I was, she answered without an instant's hesitation: "No. For it was not said to me where he is, you are, but where you are, he is." I confess to You, O Lord, that if I remember aright—and I have often spoken of it since—I was more deeply moved by that answer which You gave through my mother—in that she was not disturbed by the false plausibility of my interpretation and so quickly saw what was to be seen (which I certainly had not seen until she said it)—than by the dream itself: by which the joy that was to come to that holy woman so long after was foretold so long before for the relief of her present anguish. Nine years were to follow in which I lay tossing in the mud of that deep pit and the darkness of its falsity, though I often tried to rise and only fell the more heavily. All that time this chaste, god-fearing and sober widow—for such You love—was all the more cheered up with hope. Yet she did not relax her weeping and mourning. She did not cease to pray at every hour and bewail me to You, and her prayers found entry into Your sight. But for all that You allowed me still to toss helplessly in that darkness.[30]

[30] *Ibid.*, 3, 11, 19 (Sheed, pp. 55 f.).

The concubine whom Augustine had taken at Carthage as a very young man was with him about ten years. Monnica strove hard to have her dismissed and a legitimate wife secured. The fond mother did not realize at the time that her son was destined to give up not illicit loves only but licit married love as well:

> Great effort was made to get me married. I proposed, the girl was promised me. My mother played a great part in the matter for she wanted to have me married and then cleansed with the saving waters of baptism, rejoicing to see me grow every day more fitted for baptism and feeling that her prayers and Your promises were to be fulfilled in my faith. By my request and her own desire she begged You daily with the uttermost intensity of her heart to show her in a vision something of my future marriage, but You would never do it. She did indeed see certain vain fantasies, under the pressure of her mind's preoccupation with the matter; and she told them to me, not, however, with the confidence she always had when You had shown things to her, but as if she set small store by them; for she said that there was a certain unanalysable savor, not to be expressed in words, by which she could distinguish between what You revealed and the dreams of her spirit. Still she pushed on with the matter of my marriage, and the girl was asked for. She was still two years short of the age for marriage but I liked her and agreed to wait. . .[31]
>
> Meanwhile my sins were multiplied. She with whom I had lived so long was torn from my side as a hindrance to my forthcoming marriage.[32]

It can be seen that prayers were indeed needed for Augustine. His faithful mother's prayers were combined with tears that were destined to break down the wall of error that surrounded him: "For Thy hand, O my God, in the secret of Thy Providence did not desert my soul; from the blood of my mother's heart, sacrifice for me was offered Thee day and night by her tears, and Thou didst act with me in marvellous ways." [33]

But it was necessary for Monnica to have great trust in God's answer to her prayers, for her wayward son in the autumn of 383 —three years before his conversion—practised a cruel deception that broke her heart. He fled from Africa to Italy, and deserted his mother completely:

[31] *Ibid.*, 6, 13, 23 (Sheed, pp. 124 f.).

[32] *Ibid.*, 6, 15, 25 (Sheed, p. 126).

[33] *Ibid.*, 5, 7, 13 (Sheed, pp. 91 f.).

Why I left the one country and went to the other, You knew, O God, but You did not tell either me or my mother. She indeed was in dreadful grief at my going and followed me right to the seacoast. There she clung to me passionately, determined that I should either go back home with her or take her to Rome with me, but I deceived her with the pretence that I had a friend whom I did not want to leave until he had sailed off with a fair wind. Thus I lied to my mother, and such a mother; and so got away from her. But this also You have mercifully forgiven me, bringing me from the waters of that sea, filled as I was with execrable uncleanness, unto the waters of Your grace; so that when I was washed clean, the floods that poured from my mother's eyes, the tears with which she daily watered the ground towards which she bent her face in prayer for me, should cease to flow. She would not return home without me, but I managed with some difficulty to persuade her to spend the night in a place near the ship where there was an oratory in memory of St. Cyprian. That night I stole away without her: she remained praying and weeping. And what was she praying for, O my God, with all those tears but that You should not allow me to sail! But You saw deeper and granted the essential of her prayer: You did not do what she was at that moment asking, that You might do the thing she was always asking. The wind blew and filled our sails and the shore dropped from our sight. And the next morning she was frantic with grief and filled Your ears with her moaning and complaints because You seemed to treat her tears so lightly, when in fact You were using my own desires to snatch me away for the healing of those desires, and were justly punishing her own too earthly affection for me with the scourge of grief. For she loved to have me with her, as is the way of mothers but far more than most mothers; and she did not realize what joys you would bring her from my going away. She did not realize it, and so she wept and lamented, and by the torments she suffered showed the heritage of Eve in her, seeking with sorrow what in sorrow she had brought forth. But when she had poured out all her accusation at my cruel deception, she turned once more to prayer to You for me. She went home and I to Rome.[34]

Monnica had faced very sad days. Before her son had left for Rome, she had tried to enlist human aid to cooperate with divine, in order to recall him from error. One such attempt and the firm prediction which she received of ultimate success has become famous:

But you gave her another assurance by the mouth of your priest, a

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[34] *Ibid.*, 5, 8, 15 (Sheed, pp. 95 f.).

certain bishop reared up in the Church and well grounded in Your Scriptures. My mother asked him in his kindness to have some discussion with me, to refute my errors, to unteach me what was evil and teach me what was good, for he often did this when he found such people as it might profit. He refused, rightly as I have realized since. He told her that I was not yet ripe for teaching because I was all puffed up with the newness of my heresy and had already upset a number of insufficiently skilled people with certain questions—as she had, in fact, told him. "But," said he, "let him alone. Only pray to the Lord for him: he will himself discover by reading what his error is and how great his impiety."

The bishop went on to tell her that his mother had been seduced by the Manichees so that as a small child he had been given over to them; and he had not only read practically all their books but had also copied them out; and had found out for himself, with no need for anyone to argue or convince him, that he must leave the sect. And he had left it. When he had told her this, my mother would not be satisfied but urged him with repeated entreaties and floods of tears to see me and discuss with me. He, losing patience, said: "Go your way; as sure as you live, it is impossible that the son of these tears should perish." In the conversations we had afterwards, she often said that she had accepted this answer as if it had sounded from heaven.[35]

Apparently, other promises also were made to her in her persevering task of recalling her son to goodness of life:

You could not despise and withhold Your help from the tears with which she begged of You not gold and silver nor for any changing fleeting good, but the salvation of my soul—for it was by Your gift that she was what she was. Rather, Lord, You were ever at hand to hear and do all in the order that You had predestinated. It could not be that You should deceive her in those visions and answers, those I have mentioned and others I have not mentioned. She laid them up in her faithful heart and again and again reminded You of them in her prayers, as of things written with Your own hand.[36]

After reaching Rome, Augustine fell into a serious illness. He attributed to his mother's prayers the fact that he did not die in his sad state as a result of his sickness:

Rome welcomed me with the scourge of bodily illness, and I very nearly went to hell bearing all the weight of deadly sins which I had

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[35] *Ibid.*, 3, 12, 21 (Sheed, pp. 56 f.). [36] *Ibid.*, 5, 9, 17 (Sheed pp. 94 f.).

committed against You and myself and other men, over and above the bond of original sin whereby we all die in Adam. . . . My fever grew worse and I was very close to going off to perdition. For where should I have gone if I had departed then save to fire and torments such as my deeds deserved in the justice of Your ordinance? My mother was far away and knew nothing of my illness, but she prayed on for me. You who are present everywhere heard her where she was and had compassion on me where I was, so that I recovered the health of my body, though still far from health in my sacrilegious heart. . . . Had my mother's heart been pierced by *that* wound, it would never have been made whole. I have no words to express the love she had for me, and with how much more anguish she was now in spiritual travail of me than when she had borne me in the flesh. I cannot see how she could have been healed if my death in sin had come to pierce the deepest heart of her love. And where would then have been those urgent and ceaselessly repeated prayers? Nowhere but with You.[37]

As we have already seen, Monnica practised the active, as well as the contemplative life. She determined to follow her erring son even across the sea on the unsafe ships of the fourth century:

I had come into the depths of the sea and I had lost faith and all hope of discovering the truth. By this time my mother had come to me, following me over sea and land with the courage of piety and relying upon You in all perils. For they were in danger from a storm, and she reassured even the sailors—by whom travellers newly ventured upon the deep are ordinarily reassured—promising them safe arrival because thus You had promised her in a vision.[38]

She found in Milan her son freed from the Manichaean error, though not yet fully converted. This was also the occasion on which she met the saintly bishop of Milan, Ambrose, whose high opinion of her we have already mentioned. Her confidence in her son's ultimate conversion now became greater than ever:

She found me in a perilous state through my deep despair of ever discovering the truth. But even when I told her that if I was not yet a Catholic Christian, I was no longer a Manichean, she was not greatly exultant as at some unlooked-for good news, because she had already received assurance upon that part of my misery; she bewailed me as one dead certainly, but certainly to be raised again by You, offering me in her mind as one stretched out dead, that You might say to the widow's son: "Young man, I say to thee arise": and he should sit up

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[37] *Ibid.*, 5, 9, 16-17 (Sheed, pp. 94 f.). [38] *Ibid.*, 6, 1, 1 (Sheed, p. 105).

and begin to speak and You should give him to his mother. So her heart was not shaken with any tumult of exultation at hearing that what daily she had begged of You with tears had in so large part happened: for I was at least rescued from heresy, even if I had not yet attained the truth. In fact, because she was certain that You would give her what remained since You had promised her all, she answered me serenely and with a heart full of confidence that in Christ she believed that she would see me a faithful Catholic before she died. So much she said to me. But to You, O fount of mercy, she multiplied her prayers and her tears that You should hasten Your help and enlighten my darkness: and she hastened to church more zealously than ever and drank in the words of Ambrose as a fountain of water springing up into life everlasting. She loved that man as an angel of God because she had learned that it was by him that I had been brought so far as to the wavering state I was now in; through which she took it for granted that I had to pass on my way from sickness to health, with some graver peril yet to come, analagous to what doctors call the crisis.[39]

Finally, about the month of August, 386, her reward was granted. Her son was not only converted, but had even resolved upon a life of celibacy. Augustine's closest friend, the future bishop of Tagaste, Alypius, accompanied him to bring the joyful news to Monnica:

Then we went in to my mother and told her, to her great joy. We related how it had come about: she was filled with triumphant exultation, and praised You who are mighty beyond what we ask or conceive: for she saw that You had given her more than with all her pitiful weeping she had ever asked. For You converted me to Yourself so that I no longer sought a wife nor any of this world's promises, but stood upon that same rule of faith in which You had shown me to her so many years before. Thus You changed her mourning into joy, a joy far richer than she had thought to wish, a joy much dearer and purer than she had thought to find in grandchildren of my flesh.[40]

THE CHRISTIAN SAGE

Before the baptism of Augustine, mother and son journeyed to Cassiciacum with a little party of friends and students. This was in 386:

When I read the Psalms of David, songs of faithfulness and devotion in which the spirit of pride has no entry, what cries did I utter to You,

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[39] *Ibid.*, 6, 1, 1 (Sheed, pp. 105 f.).

[40] *Ibid.*, 8, 12, 30 (Sheed, p. 179).

O my God, I but a novice in Your true love, a catechumen keeping holiday in a country house with that other catechumen Alypius: though my mother also was with us, a woman in sex, with the faith of a man, with the serenity of great age, the love of a mother, the piety of a Christian.[41]

During the autumn and winter of 386-87 at Cassiciacum Augustine wrote four works: *Answer to Skeptics, The Blessed Life, Treatise on Order,* and *Soliloquies.* Monnica took part in the discussions reported in the second and third of these works. In both of them her son had occasion to express great delight in her intellectual powers, coupled as they were with a warm Christian charity. The tribute which he paid to his mother can be seen in this statement:

Our mother, too, was with us. By long intimacy and diligent attention I had by this time discerned her acumen and burning desire for things divine. It was particularly on the occasion of a rather important disputation which I once held on my birthday with my companions, and which I have compiled into a little book [*The Blessed Life*] that her mind had been revealed to me as so rare that nothing seemed more adapted for true philosophy. Accordingly, I had determined to do my best that she be not absent from our conversation; for she had plenty of leisure.[42]

We are very fortunate to have in these dialogues, as well as in the *Confessions,* several statements reflecting the Christian wisdom of Monnica, and couched in her own words. Let us give some samples of the words of our saint:

"What, then, of the soul," I continued, "has it no nourishment of its own? Or do you consider that knowledge is its food?"

"Obviously," said Mother, "I believe that the soul is not nourished by anything other than knowledge and understanding of things."

When Trygetius showed that he had doubts about this assertion, she went on, "Haven't you yourself taught us this very day whence and where the soul is fed? For you said that it was only after lunch had been in progress for some time that you noticed what dish we were

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[41] *Ibid.,* 9, 4, 8 (Sheed, p. 188).

[42] *De ordine,* 2, 1, translated by R. P. Russell, O.S.A., *Divine Providence and the Problem of Evil* (New York, 1942) pp. 67 f. All references to *De ordine* with the exception of that above note 49 are taken from this translation.

using, because you were thinking about something or other, and yet your hand and mouth were not idle during the first part of the meal. Where, then, was your soul at that time when it was not paying attention to what you were eating? In this way, I assure you, and by such repasts does the soul nourish itself, that is, on its thoughts and cares, if it can obtain something through them."[43]

"Well, now, is everyone happy who has what he wishes?"

Then Mother observed, "If he wishes for and possesses good things, he is happy; but if he wishes for evil things, even though he has them, he is unhappy."

Smiling at her and filled with joy, I exclaimed, "You have truly reached the very citadel of philosophy, Mother. For doubtless it was merely the words which failed you that you did not elaborate just now as did Tullius, whose words on this subject are as follows. For in the *Hortensius,* the book which he wrote on the praise and defense of philosophy, he said: 'But see, certainly not the philosophers but all who are prone to argue say that those are happy who live just as they wish. This is definitely false; for to wish for what is not fitting, that is in itself most pitiable. It is not so lamentable not to gain what you wish as to wish to gain what one ought not, for depravity of will brings everyone more evil than good fortune brings good.' "[44]

But at this point Mother said, "Even if he is assured that he cannot lose all these things, nevertheless he will not be satisfied with such things. Consequently he is the more unhappy the more he is always in want."

"But suppose," I suggested to her, "that, although abounding in and overflowing with all these things, he should set for himself a limit of desire, and contentedly, fittingly, and pleasantly should enjoy them, wouldn't he seem happy to you?"

"He is not happy, then," she answered, "because of these things, but because of the moderation of his own mind."

"Most excellent," I cried. "No other response ought to be made to this question, and no other certainly should have been given by you."[45]

When even Mother, whose statement I was defending, had approved this along with the others, nevertheless with some doubt she said: "I still do not know and not even yet do I see clearly how unhappiness can be separated from want and want from unhappiness. For even this man who was extraordinarily wealthy and desired nothing more, as

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[43] *De beata vita,* 8 (Brown, pp. 71 f.).

[44] *Ibid.,* 10 (Brown, pp. 75 f.).

[45] *Ibid.,* 11 (Brown, p. 79).

you say, yet because he feared he would lose his wealth, lacked wisdom. Therefore would we not say that he was in want if he lacked silver and money? Shall we not say that he was in want when he lacked wisdom?"

When all had cried out in admiration and I myself was very much excited and pleased because it was she in particular who had stated what I had acquired at great pains from the books of the philosophers and had planned to bring out last, "Do you see," I asked, "that many varied doctrines are one thing, but a soul wholly devoted to God is another? For whence come those utterances which we admire except from Him?"[46]

At this point Mother, having recognized words which remained firmly fixed in her memory, and, as if awakening to her faith, joyfully uttered that verse of our bishop:

"Assist, O Trinity, those who pray," and added, "This is unmistakably the happy life, a life which is perfect, toward which we are hastening, and which we must presume that we shall attain by unwavering faith, eager hope, and ardent love."[47]

Her ardent love for Holy Scripture is thus referred to:

Then, mother, so that you may not be uninformed, the Greek word from which the term, philosophy, is derived, is in the Latin tongue, called *love of wisdom.* Wherefore, the divine Scriptures themselves, which you so heartily embrace, command, not that all philosophers, but the philosophers of this world, be avoided and esteemed for nought. . . . Now if you had no love whatever for wisdom, I would utterly disregard you in my writings; if, however, you had just ordinary love for it, I would not entirely disregard you; and much less if you were to love wisdom as much as I love it. And now, seeing that you love it even more than you love me—and knowing your great love for me; and seeing that you have made such advance in it that you are not frightened by the dread of any chance discomfort or even death itself—a most difficult attainment for even the most learned, and a position which all acknowledge to be the stoutest stronghold of philosophy—in view of all this, shall I not gladly entrust myself to you even as a disciple?[48]

Even the thorny problem of the origin of evil was discussed by this strong-minded woman:

Then mother said: "It is not my opinion that nothing was able

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[46] *Ibid.*, 27 (Brown, pp. 101 ff.).

[47] *Ibid.*, 35 (Brown, pp. 113 ff.).

[48] *De ordine* 1, 32 (Russell, p. 65).

to be done beyond the order of God. For that very evil which had an origin in no wise had it from the command of God; but His justice did not allow it, to be inordinate, and drove it by compulsion into an order befitting it."[49]

Not only her prayers, therefore, but her co-operation and example as well, spurred on her son in his search for truth:

> And, mother, to the end that these petitions be most observantly made, we enjoin the charge on you, through whose prayers I unhesitatingly believe and proclaim that God has given me this resolve: to prize nothing more highly than the finding of truth, to wish for, to think of, to love nothing else. And I furthermore believe that through your petitioning we shall obtain the great blessing which through your meriting we have come to desire.[50]

THE DYING CHRISTIAN

Monnica's son and grandson, Augustine and Adeodatus, were baptized in April, 387, in Milan. She stayed with them, intending to return with them to Africa where Augustine was to live in a monastic community. Her kindly services were not diminished.[51] She proceeded to Ostia Tiberina with Augustine and his little company, to prepare for the sea voyage. God's will was that she should not make the trip.

Her last recorded act before she was seized by a deadly fever was her famous experience with her son at a window overlooking the house garden. This is the scene most probably described in the painting made by Ary Scheffer in 1845 and purchased by the French government for twenty thousand francs in 1859. It takes the pen of Augustine himself to describe this adequately:

> When the day was approaching on which she was to depart this life—a day that You knew though we did not—it came about, as I believe by Your secret arrangement, that she and I stood alone leaning in a window, which looked inwards to the garden within the house where we were staying, at Ostia on the Tiber; for there we were away from everybody, resting for the sea-voyage from the weariness of our long journey. . . . There we talked together, she and I alone, in deep joy; and forgetting the things that were behind and looking forward to those that were before, we were discussing in the presence of Truth, which You are, what the eternal life of the saints would be

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[49] *Ibid.*, 2, 23 (translation mine).

[50] *Ibid.*, 2, 52 (Russell, p. 169).

[51] Cf. note 22 and the text cited.

like, which eye has not seen nor ear heard, nor has it entered into the heart of man. But with the mouth of our heart we panted for the high waters of your fountain, the fountain of the life which is with You: that being sprinkled from that fountain according to our capacity, we might in some sense meditate upon so great a matter.

And our conversation had brought us to this point, that any pleasure whatsoever of the bodily senses, in any brightness whatsoever of corporeal light, seemed to us not worthy of comparison with the pleasure of that eternal Light, not worthy even of mention. Rising as our love flamed upward towards that Selfsame, we passed in review the various levels of bodily things, up to the heavens themselves, whence sun and moon and stars shine upon this earth. And higher still we soared, thinking in our minds and speaking and marvelling at Your works: and so we came to our own souls, and went beyond them to come at last to that region of richness unending, where You feed Israel forever with the food of truth: and there life is that Wisdom by which all things are made, both the things that have been and the things that are yet to be. But this Wisdom itself is not made. . . . And while we were thus talking of His Wisdom and panting for it, with all the effort of our heart we did for one instant attain to touch it; then sighing, and leaving the first fruits of our spirit bound to it, we returned to the sound of our own tongue, in which a word has both beginning and ending. For what is like to Your Work, Our Lord, who abides in Himself forever, yet grows not old and makes all things new!

So we said: If to any man the tumult of the flesh grew silent, silent the images of earth and sea and air: and if the heavens grew silent, and the very soul grew silent to herself and by not thinking of self mounted beyond self: if all dreams and imagined visions grew silent, and every tongue and every sign and whatsoever is transient . . . and in their silence He alone spoke to us, not by them but by Himself: so that we should hear His word . . . should hear Himself and not them: just as we two had but now reached forth and in a flash of the mind attained to touch the eternal Wisdom which abides over all: and if this could continue, and all other visions so different be quite taken away, and this one should so ravish and absorb and wrap the beholder in inward joys that his life should eternally be such as that one moment of understanding for which we had been sighing—would not this be: *Enter Thou into the joy of Thy Lord?* But when shall it be? Shall it be when we shall all rise again and shall not all be changed?

Such thoughts I uttered. . . . And my mother said: "Son, for my own part I no longer find joy in anything in this world. What I am still to do here and why I am here I know not, now that I no longer hope

for anything from this world. One thing there was, for which I desired to remain still a little longer in this life, that I should see you a Catholic Christian before I died. This God has granted me in superabundance, in that I now see you His servant to the contempt of all worldly happiness. What then am I doing here?"[52]

What, indeed, was she doing? Her task was more than worthily accomplished. Again, her son describes it best:

What answer I made, I do not clearly remember; within five days or not much longer she fell into a fever. And in her sickness, the one day fainted away and for the moment lost consciousness. We ran to her but she quickly returned to consciousness, and seeing my brother and me standing by her she said as one wondering: "Where was I?" Then looking closely upon us as we stood wordless in our grief, she said: "Here you will bury your mother." I stayed silent and checked my weeping. But my brother said something to the effect that he would be happier if she were to die in her own land and not in a strange country. But as she heard this she looked at him anxiously, restraining him with her eye because he savored of earthly things, and then she looked at me and said: "See the way he talks." And then she said to us both: "Lay this body wherever it may be. Let no care of it disturb you: this only I ask of you that you should remember me at the altar of the Lord wherever you may be." And when she had uttered this wish in such words as she could manage, she fell silent as her sickness took hold of her more strongly.[53]

Her character had been refined in adversity. Her loving son clearly brings this out:

But as I considered Your gifts, O unseen God, which You send into the hearts of Your faithful to the springing up of such wonderful fruits, I was glad and gave thanks to You, remembering what I had previously known of the care as to her burial which had always troubled her: for she had arranged to be buried by the body of her husband. Because they had lived together in such harmony, she had wished—

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[52] *Confessions,* 9, 10, 23-26 (Sheed, pp. 199 ff.). Ephraem Hendikx, O.S.A., *Augustines Verhältnis zur Mystik* (Würzburg, 1936) 140-146, does not consider this to refer to infused, but to active contemplation. Gustave Combès, *Les confessions de Saint Augustine* (Paris, 1942), pp. 600 ff., insists that it does refer to passive contemplation. Many authors have disputed the point. In any case, Monnica and Augustine were certainly close to God in an uncommon way on this occasion.

[53] *Confessions,* 9, 11, 27 (Sheed, pp. 201 ff.).

so little is the human mind capable of rising to the divine—that it should be granted her, as an addition to her happiness and as something to be spoken of among men, that after her pilgrimage beyond the sea the earthly part of man and wife should lie together under the same earth. Just when this vain desire had begun to vanish from her heart through the fulness of Your goodness, I did not know; but I was pleased and surprised that it had now so clearly vanished: though indeed in the conversation we had had together at the window, when she said: "What am I still doing here?" there had appeared no desire to die in her own land. Further I heard afterwards that in the time we were at Ostia, she had talked one day to some of my friends, as a mother talking to her children, of the contempt of this life and of the attraction of death. I was not there at the time. They marvelled at such courage in a woman—but it was You who had given it to her—and asked if she was not afraid to leave her body so far from her own city. But she said: "Nothing is far from God, and I have no fear that He will not know at the end of the world from what place He is to raise me up."[54]

In her illness, she who had endured such sorrow because of her son referred to his love and dutifulness:

It was a joy to me to have this one testimony from her: when her illness was close to its end, meeting with expressions of endearment such services as I rendered, she called me a dutiful loving son, and said in the great affection of her love that she had never heard from my mouth any harsh or reproachful word addressed to herself. But what possible comparison was there, O my God who made us, between the honour I showed her and the service she has rendered me?[55]

Her thoughts were completely occupied with the affairs of her soul, not with those of her languishing body:

For on that day when her death was so close, she was not concerned that her body should be sumptuously wrapped or embalmed with spices, nor with any thought of choosing a monument or even for burial in her own country. Of such things she gave us no command, but only desired to be remembered at Thy altar, which she had served without ever missing so much as a day, on which she knew that the holy Victim was offered by whom the handwriting is blotted out of the decree that was contrary to us. . . .

To this sacrament of our redemption Thy handmaid had bound her soul by the bond of faith.[56]

Then came the end, apparently in October or early November,

[54] *Ibid.*, 9, 11, 28 (Sheed, pp. 202 ff.).
[55] *Ibid.*, 9, 12, 30 (Sheed, p. 203).
[56] *Ibid.*, 9, 13, 36 (Sheed, p. 207).

387, simply described by Augustine: "And so on the ninth day of her illness, in the fifty-sixth year of her life and the thirty-third of mine, that devout and holy soul was released from the body."[57]

What followed immediately afterward can be told rapidly. Augustine was sadly grieved, but was unwilling to weep at her entry into a better life.[58] The boy Adeodatus was checked from sobbing. Then Evodius, another close friend, chanted a psalm to which all responded.[59] Mass was celebrated, the body was buried. Augustine was still dry-eyed.[60] Then he returned home and slept a short time. When he awoke, he felt somewhat better. He lay thinking in bed:

> And then little by little I began to recover my former feelings about Your handmaid, remembering how loving and devout was her conversation with You, how pleasant and considerate her conversation with me, of which I was thus suddenly deprived. And I found solace in weeping in Your sight both about her and for her, about myself and for myself. I no longer tried to check my tears, but let them flow as they would, making them a pillow for my heart: and it rested upon them, for it was Your ears that heard my weeping, and not the ears of a man, who would have misunderstood my tears and despised them. But now, O Lord, I confess it to You in writing, let him read it who will and interpret it as he will: and if he sees it as sin that for so small a portion of an hour I wept for my mother, now dead and departed from my sight, who had wept so many years for me that I should live ever in Your sight—let him not scorn me but rather, if he is a man of great charity, let him weep for my sins to You, the Father of all the brethren of Your Christ.[61]

EPILOGUE

The body of our saint was first interred in a simple grave at Ostia. It was transferred later, possibly in the sixth or seventh century, to the Church of St. Aurea in the same locality and placed in a deep vault. For a time Monnica seems to have been almost forgotten. Interest in her was reawakened in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries. Pope Martin V, in 1430, appointed his confessor Pietro Assalbizi, O.S.A., Bishop of Aleth, to search for her relics. After some difficulty the friar and his fellow-searchers

[57] *Ibid.*, 9, 11, 28 (Sheed, p. 203).
[58] *Ibid.*, 9, 12, 29-30 (Sheed, p. 203).
[59] *Ibid.*, 9, 12, 30 (Sheed, p. 204).
[60] *Ibid.*, 9, 12, 32 (Sheed, p. 204).
[61] *Ibid.*, 9, 12, 33 (Sheed, p. 205).

were successful. The relics were transferred to Rome; the Pope presided at the services in the church of Saint Trypho and confided the relics to the Augustinian Order in whose loving care they still remain. He preached on this occasion a discourse in which he sketched the saint's virtues, and gave an account of the rediscovery of her relics. Maffeo Veggio, the Renaissance humanist and devout client of St. Monnica, paid for the white marble tomb in which the remains were placed and for the construction of a chapel to inclose the new tomb. By the Pope's orders, however, the head was enclosed in a golden reliquary. In 1566, Cardinal d'Estoutville, Archbishop of Rouen, erected the church of Sant' Agostino, containing two similar chapels dedicated to the saintly pair, Augustine and Monnica. Into one of these the remains of Monnica were removed and placed in an urn of glass in the shape of a tomb. The old tomb also is preserved in the same chapel. Her feast is observed on May 4, the eve of the day on which the conversion of her son used to be celebrated. The example of Monnica's great task in helping to restore Augustine to the true faith led to the formation in Paris in the year 1850 of the Association of Christian Mothers to pray for sons and husbands who had gone astray. In 1856 the Association was raised to the rank of an Archconfraternity which soon spread over the Catholic world.[62]

In 1946 announcement was made of a discovery that brought joy to the lovers of St. Monnica. Two boys, playing in the courtyard of the Church of St. Aurea at Ostia, had come across part of a marble slab whereon the consul of 408, Anicius Auchenius Bassus had placed a metrical inscription in honour of our saint, apparently before the death of her illustrious son. We can easily supply the missing sections since it was copied by some unknown pilgrim no later than the eighth century and has come down in at least twelve manuscripts. It may be translated as follows:

> Thy most chaste mother, O Augustine her offspring, who was yet another facet of thy merit, left her mortal remains here. Thou keepest as a priest [or bishop] the heavenly laws of peace, and instructest by thy character the peoples entrusted to thee. A greater glory crowns both of you with the praise of your deeds, O mother of virtues, O offspring even more fortunate!

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[62] This paragraph is based chiefly upon Bougaud, *op. cit.*, chapters 17 and 18, pp. 333-69.

It is not mere dreaming to speculate that this slab is "probably . . . an authentic relic, that is, a fragment of the tomb," of St. Monnica. There is some indication that "the marble slab belonged to the tomb before the epitaph was engraved upon it." [63] If this is so, we have recovered part of the very slab before which the bereaved Augustine stood before embarking for Africa in 388.

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[63] Rudolph Arbesmann, O.S.A., "A Lucky Archaeological Find," *Classical Bulletin,* 23 (1946), 9 ff.

FIFTY YEARS AGO

In the October, 1898, issue of *The American Ecclesiastical Review* the leading article, by Mr. John Hyde, of Chicago, is entitled "Our Church Music in the Light of Ecclesiastical Legislation." It is a commentary on a decree, sent out a few years previously by the Sacred Congregation of Rites to the bishops of Italy, but applicable to conditions prevailing in the United States. To exemplify the extremes to which some choir directors had gone, Mr. Hyde states: "I recently heard Küchen's well-known love song, *Good Night, Farewell, My own True Heart,* sung to the words of the hymn to the Blessed Sacrament, *O Salutaris Hostia!* A composition which is in great vogue in small choirs as music for the *Tantum Ergo,* the composition of which is ascribed to one Rossi, might commonly have been heard many years ago, as popular love-and-wine song in the beer-gardens of Prussia and Eastern Holland." [The *Motu Proprio* of Pope Pius X has done much to remedy these abuses]. . . . Abbé Hogan, writing on "Seminary and University Studies," suggests that the most intelligent of our seminarians be chosen and prepared for University studies: "In each class there are a certain number of students—say on-third—who are capable, in various degrees, of work of a higher order than can be expected from the others, and who, under the intelligent guidance of a professor, would gladly apply themselves to it." . . . In the Conference section a writer who signs himself P. McD., discusses the question whether a convert should make his first confession to the priest who instructed him or to another. He states that a convert should be distinctly and emphatically told that not only is he free but is even advised to make his confession to a strange priest. He adds that this confession need not be made on the occasion of the conditional baptism, but can take place several days later. . . . The *Review* opens a new department entitled "Recent popular Books," intended to serve as a guide for priests and teachers by giving a brief account of new works, especially in the field of fiction.

F. J. C.

THERE IS A SPEED LAW

If tickets were handed out for verbal speeding and endangering thought traffic, many a Sunday morning preacher would find such a ticket in his Monday morning mail. For, possibly, the most common fault of the American pulpit is too rapid speech. With what results? Intelligibility is reduced and attention is dissipated. When a preacher rushes through his sermon with throttle wide open, many a pew-sitter departs from the Church with only vague or confused notions about the subject matter of the sermon.

Preaching is not only a matter of being heard but of being understood. Many a priest whose enunciation is fairly good is not understood because he catapults his ideas at his audience at too fast a rate. It takes the human mind a certain amount of time to comprehend an idea. Realizing this, the preacher must speak slow enough to allow his audience to grasp one idea before preceeding to another. The pulpit orator who fires his ideas with machine-gun rapidity will leave his auditors dazed and confused. The whole purpose of speaking is to convey ideas to others. Speaking too rapidly very often prevents such communication, thus rendering many potentially fruitful sermons sterile.

But is there a law that governs the rate of speech? There is. But like the law that governs the speed of motor vehicles, it varies greatly depending upon circumstances. According to the general law, one's rate of speaking should not exceed 150 words a minute lest thought traffic be endangered, or fall below ninety words a minute lest thought traffic be blocked. (Articles and prepositions are counted as words). The maximum rate of 150 words a minute should be employed only when speaking on the radio or in a small room, and then only for a limited time. In a large church, speaking over 125 words a minute would be extremely hazardous.

In determining one's rate of speaking, several factors must be taken into consideration. The first is the speech mechanism. Just as different types of automobiles vary in their maximum speed, so different speech mechanisms vary in their maximum speed. Some individuals, because of the shape of the mouth, the size of the tongue etc., cannot go faster than 125 words a minute without becoming indistinct. Others, however, can speak 150 words a minute and still be distinct in their delivery. When the relative speed

limit of the mechanism is exceeded, enunciation suffers. As a consequence, many an auditor, finding it too difficult to supply missing consonants and to unscramble jammed words, "throws in the sponge" and gives his mind up to other things.

The second factor to be considered is the size of the room in which one is speaking. The larger the room, the slower the pace. If one is speaking in a very large church where the acoustics are poor, one must be almost painfully slow. On the other hand, the smaller the room and the fewer the people, the more the rate of speaking can approach that of normal conversation.

The third factor to be taken into consideration is the nature of the matter with which one is dealing. To drive a car fifty miles an hour on an open highway would not endanger life but to drive at the same rate of speed through crowded city streets certainly would. So likewise, to speak at the rate of 135 words a minute for narrative matter would not endanger thought comprehension, but to speak at the same rate for heavy expository matter certainly would. The more abstract the matter, the more difficult the comprehension, therefore, the slower the pace. However, the pace should never become so slow as to block thought traffic.

The last factor to be considered in determining one's rate of preaching is the mental state to be portrayed. States of sorrow, solemnity, beauty, disappointment call for a slow deliberate pace, while states of joy, hope, excitement call for a much faster pace.

Suppose one is a verbal speedster, what can be done to slow one's pace? The most practical suggestion that can be offered is to make an effort to talk slowly in normal conversation. The priest who speaks very rapidly in the ordinary speaking situation will find it very difficult to shift gears and go slower in public address. Habits cannot be changed so easily. By speaking slowly on all occasions, the preacher acquires the habit of deliberate speech which will carry over into his pulpit endeavors. Again, if one has the tendency to violate the speed law of speech, the practice of over-syllabification of words or scanning poetry will prove helpful. It is the old principle of going to extremes in practice in order to get back into the middle.

There are two ways of slowing down the rate of the speaking: first, by increasing the number and length of the pauses; second, by increasing the quantity of the words, that is, by taking more time

to enunciate them. Take the sentence: "In the beginning was the Word and the Word was with God and the Word was God." I can slow up my rate of speaking by putting in some pauses. "In the beginning/was the Word—and the Word was with God—and the Word was God." I can further increase my slowness by increasing the length of the vowel sounds. "In the beg-i-n-ning was the W-o-r-d,—and the Word was w-i-t-h God,—and the Word w-a-s God." Both methods should be employed.

Judicious pausing does much to make preaching intelligible and impressive. A good rule to follow in this matter is to pause one count for a comma, two counts for a semicolon or a period, and four counts for the end of a paragraph. Give the ideas a chance to "sink in."

Most preachers who are accustomed to speak too rapidly, when they try to slow down, have a tendency to pause too frequently and to continue to rush between pauses. Such a practice distorts the meaning and destroys the rhythm of speaking. The proper type of slowness is the result of increasing the quantity of the vowel sounds, taking plenty of time to enunciate the words, and pausing only where the meaning allows. One cannot acquire proper slowness by merely increasing the number and length of the pauses; one must lengthen the quantity of the words.

Don't say: "I can't go slow. I am not built that way. I am of a nervous temperament." Granted that it will be harder for you than for a person of different temperament; but it can be done. It has been done.

What will speaking slowly do for your preaching? First, it will make your preaching more intelligible. Your congregation will hear your every word, as proper pace eliminates most faults of articulation. They will have a chance to absorb each idea. Your sermons, instead of merely stimulating their ears, will begin to affect their lives. And after all, isn't that why you preach?

Second, it will do more than any one thing to make your preaching impressive. I know many preachers who make a tremendous impression upon their hearers. Their matter is ordinary; their voice is average. What makes them impressive? They speak slowly and deliberately. Take a section of your sermon and read it first at a fast rate. Then read the same passage slowly and deliberately. Which is more impressive and convincing?

Third, by preaching slowly, you will get more variation of pitch in your voice. According to the law of sound, the faster the rate of speaking, the fewer the modulations of pitch. A voice that is rich in variety of pitch is highly desirable. Speaking slowly will help you to acquire this quality. It will also enable you to vary your rate of preaching. If you always drive your speech mechanism at top speed, there is little chance for variation of pace.

No matter how beautiful your voice may be, no matter how excellent your matter may be, if you speak too rapidly the effectiveness of your preaching will be greatly lowered. Speaking too rapidly has prevented many a priest from becoming a really good preacher. Is it preventing you?

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PENANCE AND PEACE

Is there not perchance, Venerable Brethren, in this spirit of penance also a sweet mystery of peace? "There is no peace to the wicked" says the Holy Spirit, because they live in continuous struggle and conflict with the order established by nature and by its Creator. Only when this order is restored, when all peoples faithfully and spontaneously recognize and profess it, when the internal conditions of peoples and their outward relations with other nations are founded on this basis, then only will stable peace be possible on earth. But to create this atmosphere of lasting peace, neither peace treaties, nor the most solemn pacts, nor international meetings or conferences, not even the noblest and most disinterested efforts of any statesman will be enough unless in the first place are recognized the sacred rights of natural and divine law. No leader in public economy, no power of organization will even be able to bring social conditions to a peaceful solution, unless first in the very field of economics there triumphs moral law based on God and conscience.

—Pope Pius XI, in the Encyclical, *Caritate Christi compulsi,* issued May 3, 1932.

THE PRIEST IN RADIO

Part I

Radio as a mass medium for the communication of ideas is perhaps the most powerful agent the world has ever known. It far outranks the newspaper or the book, for in the case of those media, you have to be able to read. In the case of radio, all you have to do is listen, and the message comes across to you. Of course, the trick is in influencing people to listen. A program has no effect if it has no listeners.

The power of radio is demonstrated by a casual glance at what it has done in the field of advertising. Without going into statistics, we may be certain that it is a powerful selling agent, or radio time would not be valuable, nor would people with products to sell bother with it if it didn't produce results. So we may assume that it certainly has helped to sell cigarettes and cereals, and automobiles and refrigerators, and cheese and soft drinks, and almost anything else that is saleable.

It has another power, the like of which has never been seen before. It can sell ideas; it can indoctrinate whole nations in a space of weeks where formerly such indoctrination would have taken years, and then have been only partially effective.

Radio is more subtle in its appeal than the press, because, for one thing, it plays more effectively on the imagination and the emotions than the printed word. It can inflame the passions by the living voice, and while the printed page can also inflame them, it is not nearly so quick or so effective. Reading is an acquired art; listening is a part of life.

So if radio can sell automobiles and cereals, it can sell ideas and, therefore, it can be a potent power for disseminating the truth about God and His Church. If we Catholics do not avail ourselves of its power for good, the message of the Church may easily be lost in a welter of subversive propaganda on the part of the enemies of the Church and the state.

We often feel that the Communists have infiltrated radio and other media of communication. That is true. But our hope in this day is to have Catholics in there too. If the Reds can say their say, then we must say ours, too, only we must say ours even more

effectively. We must have not only a laity, but a priesthood that is vitally interested in radio.

This, then, is the burden of this paper: to discuss some of the ways the priest can insert his ideas and his talents into this modern method of communication. He is a living teacher of the truths of Christ. His voice is of especial importance. Moreover, he can be of inestimable help in encouraging laymen in the work of spreading the Church's teachings through radio. We shall, therefore, discuss these two functions of the priest in radio by making available some thoughts and experiences that have proved helpful in producing radio programs on three national networks.

THE NATURE OF THE MEDIUM

Radio as a medium for communicating ideas has its own peculiar techniques which flow from its nature. While it can be a potent medium for transmitting news, its techniques differ from those of the newspaper. While it can be a potent medium for the speaker, its techniques differ profoundly from those of the orator with an audience before him. In speaking to people in a lecture hall, the orator has the advantage of watching the expressions on his listeners' faces, of seeing whether or not they are becoming restless, of watching the effect he is having on them.

On the radio, however, the speaker, to some extent, works blindly. He cannot see the people to whom he is speaking; he cannot determine whether he is interesting them in his message or not; he cannot get from them the inspiration and "lift" that comes from a personal contact with a group.

Moreover, on the radio, his listeners can stop listening to him merely by tuning him out. In the auditorium, even though he be deadly dull, the audience will not walk out on him because of the social compulsion of remaining, if for no other reason.

A further point: in the auditorium, the speaker is relatively sure that he has before him people who, in general, are interested in what he has to say, otherwise they wouldn't bother to come out of their homes to listen to him. On the radio, he frequently has an audience that may know little about what he is saying and may care still less. His message may even frequently be reaching hostile ears. If he wants to hold an audience, then, that is composed of some friends, some enemies, and some completely indif-

ferent listeners, he must build his talk and polish his delivery so as to do his best to win them to his message and hold them until he is finished.

All these elements require that the radio speaker develop a technique different from that of the platform or the pulpit. We shall examine later some of the ways his technique can be developed.

But now there are a few more points to be considered. The nature of the medium is also conditioned by the nature of the audience, which has been somewhat cynically described as having a mental age of a twelve-year-old child. This, of course, is not true. The radio audience consists chiefly of people of a middle stratum of education—people who have had a high-school education. The great mass of listeners are not the uneducated or the highly educated. In appealing to them, then, you must appeal not to the learned nor to the completely unlettered, but to the people in a middle range of learning and educational background.

Many people who start working with radio fail in either one direction or the other. Either they try to appear very learned or they seem to despise the people they are talking to and are trying to reach, and then they talk down to the audience. Both approaches are bad.

Since the speaker is not seen by the radio audience, he cannot rely on affecting it by means of gestures, facial expressions or other devices so common to the orator in the presence of his audience. However effective gestures are in speaking before an audience, they have no meaning to the radio listener. True enough, they may be indulged in by the speaker before the microphone in order to help him express his feelings more perfectly. A radio actor will scowl when he is reading angry lines and smile when he is reading pleasant lines. This helps his mood and projects it to his audience. But the gestures themselves are meaningless so far as the audience is concerned.

The radio speaker, then, must be prepared to project his personality and his message by other means. This he can do, and good radio speakers do it, by relying on the emotional and imaginative appeal which is one of the most powerful of the many assets of radio.

Radio can create the illusion of water falling, the sea raging, a house burning, and a thousand other things by means of sound effects. By these sounds, often produced in the studio by very

pedestrian means, such as the crumpling of cellophane before a mike to stimulate the crackling of flames, the listener is made to see in his mind's eye a house burning or whatever effect the script calls for. The listener is made to see all these things through the power of his imagination which has been stimulated by sound.

Now, while the radio speaker cannot use sound effects, he can still create an imaginative picture in the listener's mind. In fact, he must do so if his talk is to have any effect on the listener, except making him wish the whole thing were finished.

If radio, then, appeals powerfully to the listener through the imagination, it has another powerful appeal that is lacking in the printed page and other media of communication. It can stimulate emotional responses as can few other arts. To do this it uses music, as illustrated in dramatic shows by the bridges that change the mood from one scene to another. Music creates in radio the effects that lighting achieves in the theatre.

Then, of course, there is the spoken word itself. In this, too, lies a powerful emotional appeal if the words are handled right. If they are not, the show falls flat. It must be remembered that radio achieves all its effects by sound and sound alone. Hence, the importance of every sound that comes out of the loudspeaker. This is the reason why radio men are disturbed by even such accidental sounds as line noises and interference. Any sound that does not contribute to the emotional or imaginative content of the show is bad.

Since imagination and emotion are the primary elements through which radio achieves its effects, it is they which make the radio program a "show." In radio, if it isn't a show it isn't anything. This simply means that the program has an emotional and imaginative content that carries the listener along.

This leads us to a further consideration—radio as an entertainment medium. Since emotion and imagination are the prime ingredients of drama, it is not without reason that dramatic programs are popular on the air. Because of the emotional content of music, it is no wonder that music programs are popular on the air.

But among the lowest in the listening preferences of the nation are educational programs. People, so far, don't want to use radio, any more than they want to use the movies, as an educational medium. They think of it as an entertainment, as a means of relaxing from their day's work.

I am not pretending to argue whether or not this is good. I simply state it as a fact that has been shown by research. Such is the taste and the outlook of the radio audience.

The net result is that even education programs and informational programs must, in some sense of the word, be "shows."

Even educational programs, such as the "America's Town Meeting of the Air," on ABC, have the quality of a show because of their impact on the listeners' emotions. These emotions are raised by the sense of interest that surrounds a conflict of opinion. But even so, they are not the most popular programs on the air.

People don't like to be "taught" via the airwaves. They put up a mental resistance to being "educated" by radio. The result is that the teaching and educational function of radio, great though it can be, must be sugar-coated with the appeal to the emotions and the imagination. Radio, in its present stage, is not capable of selling to the mass audience pure ratiocination and didacticism. You have to "sneak up" on the audience with educational programs.

Now if this is true of educational programs, how much more true it is of religious programs. Here we are dealing not only with education in its broad sense, but with the propagation of ideas that are highly abstract, and that frequently run counter to the every-day thinking of people who are steeped in materialism and even paganism.

THE PRIEST'S EQUIPMENT FOR RADIO

Every priest has been given, during his seminary career, a thorough course in philosophy, and in dogmatic and moral theoolgy, to say nothing of Scripture, languages, and the bases of preaching. He has with him every day one of the greatest anthologies of Christian thought ever put between covers—the Roman Breviary. He has a still further and perhaps even more important piece of equipment—a special opportunity to live the spiritual life himself and to guide others to live it. It is for this reason that he is called "Father." And that title, when he speaks over the radio, even to the non-Catholics in his audience, is one of his great powers over the hearts of his hearers. To them, indeed, he is a father because he is speaking the words of eternal life.

The subjects, then, which the priest studies in his seminary course give him a unique position among radio speakers. He has at his command a truly scientific background on the things of

the soul. He is thus enabled to speak authoritatively on the subject of religion. That is why many non-Catholics, despite themselves, recognize this authority which flows from knowledge, and respect it.

But great though this equipment is, not every one who possesses it is thereby automatically an effective radio speaker. This is even true of those who very frequently are capable practitioners of the art of pulpit oratory.

As we pointed out above, the medium of radio is different from that of the communication of ideas in the auditorium, and so the appeal from the pulpit is different from the appeal through the microphone. In the church, the audience is composed of people who are, even more than the auditorium audience, ready and willing to accept the speaker's message. In the pulpit the priest speaks with the weight and authority of the Church behind him. On the radio, he must imply that authority rather than rely on it. Otherwise, a great part of is audience will resent him because too many of them have preconceived opinions that differ from his.

In the church, too, the speaker may discourse at considerable length, and his audience is almost powerless to leave his presence, even if he is not holding their interest. On the radio he can be switched off the instant he loses his hearer's attention. Moreover, radio has conditioned the listeners to expect something to happen every moment, and to have the whole thing happen in, usually, thirty minutes. The radio listener expects a change of pace, variety in presentation and, in general, movement in his radio programs. That is the way radio shows are built because that is what producers have found holds an audience.

The fact, then, that a speaker can "hold" an audience for a long time in a church is no proof that he can do the same thing on the radio.

In the church he can almost leisurely develop four or five points in a sermon. He may even use a complicated approach. On the radio, where things happen fast, and where people listen with only one ear most of the time, he must be simple, direct, and brief.

Somehow, over the course of years, there has been developed a typical "preachy" type of preaching, with supposedly "oratorical" devices such as the same rising and falling inflection at the end of each sentence. There has been developed a flowery sort of diction that again is mistaken for oratory. Then there is the classical.

allusion, the quotations from the poets, often distinctly not *ad rem;* the allusion to rather abstruse theological or philosophical notions. Frankly, these have no place on radio.

Furthermore, the radio audience is not a homogeneous, docile church congregation. Many of the listeners are non-Catholics. Many of them have had only a high-school education. So the expressions that Catholics are accustomed to, like "the sacred tribunal of penance," "the Prisoner of the Tabernacle," and so on, won't mean anything to many of the listeners. Classical allusions of an abstruse character, or technical words like "concupiscence" and others won't mean anything either.

Most of all, the priest speaker must remember that many of his hearers won't be at all ready to agree with him, partly because his message is contrary to their own religious education, partly because of limitations of their vocabularies and the scope of their ideas, and in some instances because of a hostility to anything Catholic.

Now all this may seem to imply that the priest, with all his equipment, is under a terrible handicap when he gets in front of a microphone. Such is far from the case, however. The priest has a remarkable equipment at his command. The trick consists in his using every bit of it accurately, reverently, devoutly, thoroughly, charitably—but always in terms of the peculiar medium which is radio.

The great arsenal of Christian truth and the speculations of theology give the priest-speaker a special advantage. But before he can put these ideas and thoughts before the radio audience he must make them his own by filtering them through his own mind and personality. He must have such regard and charity for his listeners that his talk will come over the loudspeaker as a warm, human talk with a fellowman on the flaming love of God that has reached down and touched men's hearts so that they may live God's own life.

This does not mean that the material of the talk should be so "popularized" that it loses its accuracy or compromises with the truth, as is the case with the Sunday supplement articles on "science." Quite the contrary. But here lies the challenge to the priest-speaker. He is so accustomed to the technical side of theology, to the highly compact Latinisms of his text-books that he often has a tendency to Latinize his English. Instead of talking

about God's being present everywhere, the temptation is to speak of God's ubiquity.

Yes, that is the challenge to the priest-speaker. He must use all the knowledge and learning at his command, but he must keep it simple and accurate and to-the-point.

He must be prepared to limit his talk almost in a strait-jacket so far as time is concerned. Radio is the most time-conscious medium in the world. It works on split seconds. Five minutes overtime on the pulpit doesn't mean too much. On the radio it can blow up the whole program and, if it is a network program, the show can be "clipped" before the end. Many of the famous comedians on the air have had this happen to them in recent months. It can happen to anybody. The person to whom it happens never likes it, but unfortunately, that is the way the medium acts.

And yet the priest has the greatest sources of inspiration at his beck and call. We referred to the Breviary a few moments ago. Think of how many pithy sayings there are in the Lessons of Matins—excerpts from St. Augustine, for instance. Any one of them could be the spring-board for a strikingly different radio talk.

The great spiritual writers, the lives of the saints, the many books of meditation that the priest uses abound in inspirational ideas. His very life is glamorous; for it is he who visits the sick and sees the dying into eternity; he is the kind physician who heals troubled souls in confession; it is he who stands outside the joys of marriage and yet is the wise counselor for countless marriage problems.

His background and training fit him, then, to be truly a father to his radio audience, but his message must be couched in terms the audience will understand, and he must project his personality with all its force for spiritual good to his listeners. But this he must do not only as a priest, but as one wise in the ways of radio.

(To be continued)

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TWO CURRENTS IN CONTEMPORARY CATHOLIC THOUGHT

In his lenten pastoral for 1947, published in this country as *Growth or Decline? The Church Today,*[1] the venerable Cardinal Archbishop of Paris has focussed the attention of Catholics throughout of the world on the existence of two distinct and in some ways even divergent viewpoints within the Church today. Bishop Wright brought this same situation even more forcefully to the notice of American priests by his brilliant appreciation of Cardinal Suhard's book in last month's issue of *The American Ecclesiastical Review.*[2] The question to which these divergent answers have been given is tremendously important. The fact that there are two opposite responses to this question is no less important.

The two distinct viewpoints described in Cardinal Suhard's pastoral are alternative resolutions of a problem presented to Catholics of our age. The two viewpoints are built around diverse opinions about the manner in which the Church as a whole and Catholics as individuals ought to react to what we may call the challenge of the new civilization. The technical and scientific progress of the last century, and particularly of the last two decades, has been such as to give a world-wide extension to certain attitudes quite out of harmony with the traditional Catholic mentality. Cardinal Suhard believes that one group of Catholics urges a predominantly "defensive" attitude with reference to the contemporary world-civilization. The other group is represented as seeking rather to "permeate" the world so as to bring about a new culture along Catholic lines. These men are convinced that the definitive modern mentality is now only in an emergent status, and that the completed product can be made a Catholic thing if sufficient Catholic contribution is brought into its making.

Cardinal Suhard insists that the basic problem demands a recognition of two distinct characteristics of the Catholic Church. This society is at once transcendent and human, superior to the vicissitudes of history and of human activity, yet bearing the marks of history upon itself. As the kingdom of Jesus Christ on earth, the Church is an infallible and indefectible reality. No created agency will or can destroy it or make it cease to be the assembly of the

[1] The book was published this year by the Fides Publishers of South Bend and Montreal.

[2] Pp. 229 ff.

living God. But, because it is a living society of living men, this same Church manifests within itself certain definite characteristics which can be traced to individual civilizations and even to individual men.

The Cardinal warns his flock against two errors, both of which must be avoided if the problems of the present day are successfully to be solved. The first is the error of modernism, the second of "integralism." The true Catholic response to the problem of the day will avoid both of these tendencies. It will be the work, not of any one individual, but of the corps of Catholic scholars and workers in the apostolate. By reason of this synthesis, the Church will come to permeate every department of human life.

Taking cognizance of the two viewpoints, the Cardinal Archbishop of Paris deplores the resultant division among Catholics. The discussion itself is a good thing, since it manifests the interest of Our Lord's disciples in His Church. Nevertheless, the mutual opposition of the proponents of the two viewpoints can tend to prolong itself, and thus to constitute a scandal and a hindrance to the Church itself.

Cardinal Suhard's pastoral was addressed to the faithful of his own archidocese. Hence he describes primarily the conditions and the opinions existent among his people. But, as Bishop Wright has pointed out, approximately the same conditions and precisely the same two viewpoints are to be found among our American Catholics today.

These two tendencies or attitudes are by no means new, even though certain individual problems may be peculiar to our own century. Fr. Edgar Hocedez, S.J., in his brilliant *Histoire de la theologie au XIX^e siècle,* points to a conflict between the forces of conservatism and those of a progressive tendency as one of the outstanding characteristics of Catholic thought during the reign of Pope Leo XIII.[3] Those who are familiar with the literature of that period, as well as with the writings of the earlier portion of the nineteenth century, will have no difficulty in recognizing the two tendencies now manifest in American Catholic thought as the developments of attitudes which had come into existence during the previous century.

[3] The third volume of this work, that which deals with the reign of Pope Leo XIII, was published last year by L'Edition Universelle at Brussells and by Desclée De Brouwer at Paris.

Since these two viewpoints are existent among us, and since the division so deplored by Cardinal Suhard can affect American Catholicism, it is certainly the business of our people to understand these two attitudes as clearly as possible. We must try to see if either of the two attitudes is wrong in itself, whether either or both can be abused, and whether there is any particular danger to be noted in the implications of either. The answers to these questions are very important and not too difficult to obtain.

In the first place, it is clear that neither of these tendencies or viewpoints, as it exists in itself, is objectively reprehensible. Neither militates directly against fidelity to Our Lord, to His Church, and to His teachings. The first attitude, the one usually designated as "conservative," centers around a zeal for Catholic orthodoxy. The men and the writings that embody this viewpoint act primarily to preserve the accurate presentation of divine revelation in current teaching by members of the true Church. They enter into polemic only in order to indicate and reprove what they regard as incorrect or misleading expositions of the Catholic message.

Certainly there is nothing in any way objectionable in this purpose, and nothing reprehensible in the attitude governed by it. In itself, an inaccurate presentation of the divine message is one of the most lamentable evils in the world. It is an evil thing to hand out, as the authentic teaching of Jesus Christ in the Catholic Church, some body of doctrine which is in reality only a perversion or a mutiliated form of that teaching. The school of Catholic writers which sets itself against this evil is manifestly worthy of commendation.

But, on the other hand, the "progressive" viewpiont in modern Catholic writing is likewise blameless in itself. It is certainly the business of the Church and the responsibility of Catholics as individuals to see to it that the truth of Jesus Christ is presented to mankind as effectively as possible. Catholics would be recreant to their duty were they to allow any disaffection for what are termed modern methods of learning or the modern findings of true science to stand in the way of an active and efficacious manifestation of Catholic truth to the world. It is surely the business of the Catholic to strive to influence as many people as possible to love and to be guided by the truth of Jesus Christ.

Basically, that is the purpose underlying the "progressive" viewpoint among loyal and intelligent Catholics. This attitude reacts

against a slipshod presentation of Our Lord's message. It is opposed to the substitution of apocryphal, albeit "pious," stories, and accounts of private revelations, for the content of Catholic dogma in the works of some Catholic publicists. It insists upon the best possible presentation of Our Lord's teaching to the men and women He died to save. Essentially, then, this "progressive" attitude is a good thing. In itself, it does not call for any polemic against the men of "conservative" tendency. Indeed, for proper Catholic writing and preaching in our own day, both of these viewpoints are equally necessary.

Cardinal Suhard's pastoral speaks of the viewpoint opposed to that of the progressives as "defensive" in character. We must remember that this attitude, however, involves no lack of zeal for the propagation of the faith. Actually the desire to preserve the purity of the Catholic faith in all of its integrity and perfection in no way militates against a zeal for Catholic missionary activity. Quite the opposite is the case. Catholic dogma describes the Church as an organization which by its very nature, by reasons of its very principle of unity and being, necessarily seeks to bring new members into its fold in order to unite them with God. An aloofness from the world, in the sense of a lack of anxiety to spread the kingdom of Christ upon earth, is in no way characteristic of the men whose attitude in the religious discussions of the day is motivated primarily by a zeal for orthodoxy.

There is such a thing as a religious attitude which seems to abandon any concern for the welfare of the general mass of mankind. We see this attitude set forth in the manifesto of the "Church of Jesus Christ (Cutlerites)," one of the smaller Mormon subdivisions. The report of this group, printed in the account of the religious census for 1936, state that "Missionaries were not necessary as the gentiles had already rejected the Gospel and, when the Gospel goes to the world again, it will go to the Jews to the convincing of nations." [4] Obviously this attitude has nothing whatsoever in common with the viewpoint of any Catholic group. Yet, unfortunately, all too many descriptions of the "conservative" viewpoint in documents of a "progressive" provenance seem to imply that the Catholic who is primarily interested in orthodoxy has adopted an attitude quite similar to that of the Cutlerites.

[4] In *Religious Bodies: 1936* (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1941), II, 835.

But, we must not forget that both the "conservative" and the "progressive" attitudes can be twisted and rendered dangerous to the intellectual well-being of our Catholics today. Cardinal Suhard speaks of Modernism and integralism as two dangers which we must avoid if we are to bring about an accurate and effective presentation of Catholic truth to the modern world. The first is definitely an abuse or corruption of the "progressive" viewpoint. The second is described as an undesirable development of the "conservative" attitude.

An incautious reader of Cardinal Suhard's pastoral might possibly come to the dangerously false conclusion that Modernism and integralism, as we know them, are two contrary false doctrines, the one, as it were, to the left, and the other to the right, of genuine Catholic teaching. Nothing, of course, could be farther from the truth. Modernism, in the technical language of Catholic doctrine, is the name applied to the definite series of errors condemned in the decree *Lamentabili sane exitu,* in the encyclical *Pascendi dominici gregis,* and in the motu proprio, *Sacrorum antistitum.* Pope Pius X spoke of Modernism as "a conglomeration of all the heresies." [5]

Integralism, on the other hand, is essentially the teaching or the attitude of those who worked for the presentation of an integral Catholicism, of Catholic dogma set forth accurately and in its entirety. Most frequently the name of integralism was applied to the doctrine and the viewpoint of those Catholic writers who entered into controversy against the Modernists during the first decade of the present century. Understood in this fashion, integralism was nothing else than the contradiction of heretical Modernism. It was thus basically only the exposition of Catholic truth.

When we see that integralism is set off with Modernism in Cardinal Suhard's pastoral letter as a position to be avoided by Catholics, we must not forget that there were certain happenings of a primarily national interest in France which have motivated this terminology. Some of the French writers who had been most active in their opposition to the Modernist errors were themselves ultra-conservative in the field of politics. Many of these men were implicated in or connected with a definite royalist movement. Since some of these specifically political views were unfortunate, the men

[5] In the *Pascendi,* n. 39. Cf. *Codicis iuris canonici fontes* (Vatican City: Typis Polyglottis Vaticanis, 1933), III, 713.

who supported them brought a certain amount of discredit upon their doctrinal attitudes, and caused the name of integralism to be stretched to cover fields quite distinct from that which it originally served to designate.

Nevertheless, we must not forget the fact that Modernism, as such, is a definite heresy or collection of heretical teachings, while integralism, as such, is nothing of the sort. The true Catholic teaching is not going to be found at any half-way point between the teachings of such as Tyrrell and Loisy and the doctrines of the Catholic authors who opposed them. In opposing the dicta condemned in the *Lamentabili,* the *Pascendi,* and the *Sacrorum antistum,* the great Catholic authors of a generation ago were perfectly justified. If, as is usual in our own country, the name of integralism is applied to this specifically anti-Modernistic teaching, then integralism is nothing more than a statement of Catholic truth, implied in a denial of errors which are incompatible with the divine message of the Catholic Church.

This does not mean, of course, that every theory advanced by the great opponents of Modernism during the first decade of our century has to be accepted as Catholic doctrine. Still less does it imply that any of these individual positive opinions could rightly be termed as belonging to the essence of integralism. The men who recognized and denounced the false teachings current in certain quarters around the turn of the century differed rather sharply from one another on individual theological conclusions. The points on which they differed, and on which the men of their time might legitimately differ, did not constitute the reality which the Modernists at least knew as integralism. The work of the integralists as a group was the unmasking and the destruction of the Modernist heresy. It is this common work, and no other, which was and which still is rightly and commonly designated as integralism.

For our own country, then, it is at best confusing to indicate integralism as a danger which Catholic publicists must avoid if they are to present an active and effective statement of divine revelation to the world which needs this teaching so badly. Modernism very definitely is a danger. It is a pitfall into which a careless man might stumble if he were so concerned for the "progressive" viewpoint, so anxious to present the Catholic Church *effectively* to the world, that he had come to forget the essential constituents of Catholic dogma. Integralism, as such, is not a pitfall at all. Quite another

thing is the danger that threatens a conservative writer, zealous for the integral preservation of the Catholic faith, yet careless about the effectiveness of his own presentation of the Catholic message.

The danger from this quarter is that of writing or preaching the divine and supremely vital message of the Church in an unintelligible fashion. The men who succumb to this danger, and who thus destroy the value of their own efforts for the Church, are content to express themselves in what amounts to merely a somewhat crass transliteration of Latin dogmatic or theological texts. They speak in commonplaces which were once vital and interesting to hearers and readers of our language, but which have become thought-extinguishing catchwords to the men of our own time. They are inclined to be men of one book, alertly ready to parrot out the conclusions of one theological manual, without any regard for the fact that no one seminary text can give or hope to give a complete picture of the teachings they are privileged and commissioned to impart to the world.

The most serious evils which threaten the intellectual lives of our people, however, come from the abuse of the progressive viewpoint rather than from a perversion of the conservative attitude. The progressive is concerned primarily with the idea of presenting the Catholic doctrine effectively to the people of our age. He must always be on the alert against the temptation to modify the Catholic teaching or to leave out some of its essential constituents so as to make it appear more acceptable. The world, using the term in its basic theological sense, as the congregation basically opposed to the kingdom of God on earth, has always shown a definite hospitality to deformations of the Catholic doctrine. The history of Modernism, with its account of the sympathy given to the teachings of the Modernists by those outside the fold, is only one example of this tendency. A great deal of the Catholic Church's teaching would be highly acceptable to the world, if it were presented other than what it really is, the one divine and supernatural public revelation which is necessary for all men because God Himself has raised mankind to a supernatural destiny. The Catholic Church itself would be quite a popular institution were it not for the fact that it insistently proclaims itself for what it really is, the society of Christ, necessary to all men for salvation.

The crass Modernism of the early days of this century does not represent any immediate threat. The teaching condemned by Pope

Pius X was so manifestly a contradiction of Catholic dogma that no one could slip into it under the impression that he was forwarding the welfare of the Church. But, in attempting to popularize the presentation of Catholicism in a world impregnated with secularism, it is possible for a well-meanig progressive to adopt the false tactics of "adaptation" or of "minimizing."

Because the secularist is exclusively concerned with this world, there is always the danger that an over-zealous and under-instructed Catholic apoligist may fall into the danger of leaving out the supernatural and other-worldly content of Catholic teaching when he appeals to the modern mentality. In his *Testem benevolentiae,* Pope Leo XIII expresses himself strongly on the tactic of presenting the Catholic message without including those elements which may appear to be opposed to modern tendencies.

Pope Leo's words on this subject are of tremendous importance to theologians of our own day. He is speaking of certain "new opinions," against which he deems it his duty to protest "in order to provide for the integrity of the faith, and to guard the security of the faithful." [6]

The principles upon which the new opinions We have mentioned are based may be reduced to this: that, in order the more easily to bring over to Catholic doctrine those who dissent from it, the Church ought to adapt herself somewhat to our advanced civilization, and, relaxing her ancient rigor, show some indulgence to modern popular theories and methods. Many think that this is to be understood, not only with regard to the rule of life, but also to the doctrines in which the deposit of faith is contained. For they contend that it is opportune, in order to work in a more attractive way upon the wills of those who are not in accord with us, to pass over certain heads of doctrines, as if of lesser moment, or so to soften them that they may not have the same meaning which the Church has invariably held. On that point the Vatican Council says: "The doctrine of faith which God has revealed is not proposed like a theory of philosophy, which is to be elaborated by the human understanding, but as a divine deposit delivered to the Spouse of Christ to be faithfully guarded and infallibly declared. . . . That sense of the sacred dogmas is to be faithfully kept which Holy Mother Church has once declared, and is not to be departed from under the specious pretext of a more profound reasoning.[7]

[6] In The Great Encyclical Letters of Pope Leo XIII (New York: Benziger Brothers, 1903), p. 442.

[7] *Ibid.*

The "softening" of doctrine to which Pope Leo referred comes as an inevitable consequence of the system of "minimizing." Originally a man was supposed to "minimize" Catholic dogma legitimately if, to avoid making undue difficulties for prospective converts or for educated Catholics of extraordinary sensibility, he set forth the least possible amount of dogma consistent with divine truth. The term itself was always a source of trouble, since the preaching of Catholic truth was never anything to be judged in terms of either a minimum or a maximum. As the ambassadors of Christ, it is our business to see, not how much or how little we can preach as divinely revealed. It is our affair to see to it that our teaching is exactly and only what Our Lord has prescribed for us in and through His Church.

Pope Leo has given, in the *Testem benevolentiae,* a teaching upon which the necessary reconciliation of the two viewpoints mentioned in Cardinal Suhard's pastoral must be based. He insists upon the effective preaching of the entire Catholic message. Above all, he stresses the fact that men must be brought to Our Lord only in the way which He has prescribed.

> Far be it, then from any one to diminish or for any reason whatsoever to pass over anything of this divinely revealed doctrine. Whosoever would do so would rather wish to alienate Catholics from the Church than to bring over to the Church those who dissent from it. Let them return; indeed nothing is dearer to Our Heart; let all those who are wandering far from the sheepfold of Christ return; but let it not be by any other road than that which Christ has pointed out.[8]

Pope Leo spoke of one effect of false doctrine upon the Church of Christ. He said that such teaching would tend to drive Catholics out of the Church rather than to bring new converts into the fold. He thus adverted to the fact that heresy, considered not merely as a sin but as a teaching, has ever been the cause of schism, of disunity in the company of Christ. The unity among Catholics which he desired and which is the result of Christ's prayer for His Church comes only in and through the true presentation of the divine revelation.

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[8] *Ibid.,* p. 443.

Answers to Questions

USE OF DIFFERENT SYSTEMS OF TIME

Question: Where daylight saving time is in use, may a priest eat meat after midnight of Friday but before 1 A.M. (daylight saving time), and then celebrate Mass on Saturday? If this is permitted, is it not because the Church dispenses her members either from the law of abstinence or from the eucharistic fast from 12:00 P.M. to 1:00 A.M. while daylight saving time is employed?

Answer: For some years reliable theologians have held as solidly probable the opinion that one may follow the procedure described in question—in other words, that a person may use one system of time for one of the acts mentioned in Cannon 33, §1 (the private celebration of Mass, abstinence, etc.) and on the same day another system of time for another of these acts. Fr. Bouscaren writes: "May one choose different kinds of time for fulfilling different obligations in which the option is given? Yes; there is both sound reason and solid authority for allowing such choice. We do not see on what principle the option clearly given by the Code can be limited. There is no duty to be consistent in the reckoning of time. . . . But since the day of fast or abstinence or both is by law a day of twenty-four hours, I may not shorten it by computing the beginning and the end according to different kinds of time." (*Canon Law* [Milwaukee, 1946], p. 52).

However, all doubt about this opinion has now been removed by a recent response from the Commission for the interpretation of the Code. The question was submitted: "Whether, when one manner of computing time has been chosen, this may be changed, by virtue of Canon 33, §1, in actions that are formally diverse?" To this question, on May 29, 1947, the Commission replied in the affirmative (*AAS*, XXXIX [1947], 373).

In a case such as is described by the questioner the Church does not give a dispensation either from abstinence or from the law of the eucharistic fast. The Church merely allows freedom in the choice of various systems of computing time when formally different actions are involved.

PREPARING FOR THE WORST

Question: In case a city in our country were suddenly attacked by an enemy air forces—particularly if they used atomic bombs—what exceptions from the general rules of the Ritual would be permitted in order to provide the faithful with the sacraments as quickly as possible?

Answer: If such a dire event as our questioner visualizes were to take place, undoubtedly all the inhabitants of the city would be regarded as being in danger of death. Consequently, any priest, even though he has no faculties for confessions in the place, could impart sacramental absolution to those who sought it. He could absolve from all sins and censures; though the penitent would be obliged to have recourse subsequently (if he survived) to the proper authority for the mandate, in the event that he had a censure *ab homine,* or one most specially reserved to the Holy See. (Can. 882, 2252). Furthermore, if the circumstances did not permit confessions to be heard individually during the attack, a priest could impart absolution both to soldiers and to civilians in a general form, requiring only that the recipients manifest their contrition for sin and their desire to receive sacramental pardon (*AAS,* XXXVI [1944], 155). Of course, those absolved in this fashion would be bound to an integral confession of their sins on a future occasion, if they survived.

The Holy Eucharist could be given as viaticum—hence, without the obligation of fasting—to all Catholics situated in grave danger because of the attack, even though they actually have not been injured. If no priest were available, lay persons could give the viaticum to themselves and to others, presuming that they could get to the tabernacle and procure the Blessed Sacrament. In order to provide the viaticum a priest could celebrate Mass even though he is not fasting or has already offered the Holy Sacrifice the same day. If necessary, he could dispense with vestments and even, it seems, with an altar stone (Cf. Cappello, *De Sacramentis* [Rome, 1938], I n. 756). I do not think, however, that it would be lawful to abbreviate the Mass substantially (at least not the Canon) for the sake of greater celerity in administering the sacraments, although if a raid occurred after the consecration and there was danger that the church or altar would be destroyed, the priest could and should consume the sacred species immediately, omit-

ting any prayers still to be said before the communion—as the Missal prescribes (*De Defectibus,* X, 2).

In the course of an air raid there would ordinarily be sufficient reason to administer the sacrament of Baptism with only the essential rite, and Extreme Unction in the abbreviated form allowed by the Church for cases of urgent necessity (Can. 947, §1). For any who have been seriously wounded, and have not yet been confirmed, pastors could usually make legitimate use of their faculty to administer Confirmation. Finally, it should be noted (although the occasions for the use of this exception would rarely occur) that in danger of death a couple can be married without the presence of an authorized priest—if one cannot be obtained—merely by exchanging marital consent in the presence of two witnesses (Can. 1098, §1).

HOT BATH AS CONTRACEPTIVE

Question: A priest who acted as chaplain in a Japanese concentration camp for about three years, in the course of the recent World War, reported that some English doctors who were interned definitely maintained that if a husband and wife took a hot bath before intercourse, conception would not occur. This priest also told me that some European missionaries who were interned in the same camp declared this procedure to be perfectly lawful, because a person is permitted to take a hot bath whenever he wishes. Moreover, they said, in the circumstances motherhood would be undesirable and dangerous. What is to be said about the use of hot baths as a means of preventing conception?

Answer: It is not within our province to pass judgment on the physiological aspect of the use of hot baths to prevent conception. Apparently there is some foundation to the theory that the life-giving power of the spermatozoa is impaired or destroyed by heat, though what degree of heat is necessary, how long it must be applied, etc., are quite uncertain. Probably in the course of the next few years medical science, which is much interested in contraceptive methods nowadays, will provide more exact data on this subject.

But the moral aspect of this process is of grave concern to the priest, who is expected to guide aright the consciences of those who

seek his advice and instruction. From the principles commonly accepted by Catholic theologians it seems to follow logically that it is ordinarily gravely sinful for a married couple (or for either one) to adopt the method described by the questioner, when they have certainty or even great probability that they will thereby avoid parenthood. For, in such a case they are attempting to frustrate positively the normal effect of conjugal intercourse by a direct attack on the spermatozoa; and this is just as truly the sin of contraception as the method followed by Onan or the use of a condom.

The argument that there is nothing morally evil in the process that took place in the internment camp because bathing in itself is perfectly lawful can easily be answered. The morality of an act depends, not only on its nature (the object, in theological terminology), but also on the circumstances that surround it, particularly on the intention of the agent (the *finis operantis*). Now, in the present instance the intention to frustrate the primary purpose of sexual relation renders the act gravely sinful, at least from the subjective standpoint. Furthermore, presuming that the application of heat is effective toward destroying the spermatozoa, the act will ordinarily be a serious sin from the objective standpoint also, because of the circumstance of time (*quando*). For an act that is entirely lawful in itself can become sinful if it causes grave harm at the particular time when it is performed. *In se* it is permissible for a woman to wash out her vagina, but ordinarily she commits a mortal sin if she does this immediately after intercourse. *In se* a woman may engage in strenuous athletics, but ordinarily she is guilty of grave sin if she does this when she is pregnant. Similarly, although *in se* it is licit to take a hot bath, it is ordinarily a grave sin to do this at a time when the conjugal intercourse that is soon to follow will certainly or very probably be deprived thereby of its power of impregnation.

We say that *ordinarily* this is a grave sin; for in rare instances it might be justified on the principle of the double effect—namely, when a good effect *directly* follows from the hot bath, sufficiently desirable to justify the permitting of the bad effect (temporary sterility). This would be a very rare case, indeed; for it would hardly ever happen that a person would find it so necessary to take a hot bath immediately before intercourse that it could not be taken at some other time. Moreover, for the purpose of cleanliness a warm bath would ordinarily suffice. But, given the suffi-

cient reason, a hot bath would be justifiable, even though the spermatozoa would thereby be rendered ineffective toward conception, just as a woman is permitted as a protective against infection to inject a germicide into her vagina immediately after intercourse if her husband is affected with a venereal disease, even though a concomitant effect is the destruction of the spermatzoa. It must be emphasized that the desired good effect must follow *directly* from the hot bath. The avoidance of motherhood in a crowded concentration camp is indeed something desirable, but when it follows only indirectly, as a result of the sterility brought about by a high temperature, we are confronted with an example of a good end produced by a bad means. And this is a sufficient answer to the second argument of the priests in the concentration camp, who believed that the fact that motherhood would be undesirable and dangerous in the circumstances justified the employment of a sterilizing measure.

It might be asked if the method in question could be lawfully employed if eventually it will be discovered that the hot bath does not frustrate conception with certainty or even grave probability, but merely renders it slightly less probable. The answer would seem to be the same as that given in relation to the use of the *copula dimidiata*—namely, that one who performs this act to the end that marital relations will thereby be rendered *slightly* less likely to produce conception sins venially. (Cf. Damen. *Theologia Moralis,* Rome, 1947, I, n. 896, p. 5).

It should be added that the physiological theory on which this case is based may explain the reason why some married couples who earnestly desire a child have not been blessed in this respect. If they (or only one of them) have the custom of taking a hot bath before conjugal relations they may be using a means that is actually frustrating their laudable yearning for a child.

FRANCIS J. CONNELL, C.SS.R.

COLOR OF THE DOSSAL AND RIDDELS OF THE ALTAR

Question: What is the law regarding the color of the dossal and the riddels of the altar? Is it required that they be changed to accord with the color of the vestments of the day, as is the case

with the antependium, or is it permitted to have them of some neutral color, which is used permanently?

Answer: First of all, it should be remarked that it is not necessary to have riddles and dossal on any altar, even on that which is provided with a baldachino. These appendages are remnants of the mediaeval custom, observed in some places, of suspending curtains between the columns of the structure which supported the canopy over the altar and which were drawn at certain times during Mass, very much as is still done in churches of the Armenian Rite. However, while a canopy, either in the form of a cupola resting on four columns, technically known as a *ciborio,* or in that of a tester hanging from the ceiling or projecting from the top of the reredos, is prescribed especially for an altar at which the Blessed Sacrament is reserved, there is no liturgical legislation requiring the curtains known as dossal and riddels. This canopy, or baldachino, had passed largely into desuetude until it was revived in recent years with the construction of so-called liturgical altars (cf. *Caer. ep.,* I, xii, 13).

We might, *ex paritate,* apply to the material and color of the dossal and riddels, the rubric of the Missal (*Rub. gen.* XX) governing the antependium. Nothing definite is prescribed as to the material of the antependium but authors generally recommend that it be of silk or brocade or other fine material. As to the color of the antependium, the rubric says that it should correspond in color to that of the feast or office of the day and the Missal (*loc. cit.,* XVIII) mentions only the five liturgical colors as proper, whether for the vestments of the officiants or the *paramenta altaris.* The curtains of which we are speaking belong to the latter class and so the ideal would be to have them changed to accord with the color of the day, just as is done in the case of the antependium. However, even in the case of the latter, the change of color is prescribed only *quoad fieri potest* (*Rub. gen.* XX), so we conclude, *a fortiori,* that this variation need not be strictly observed in the matter of the dossal and riddels. A festive hue would not be proper for seasons of penance and mourning so it would be more becoming to change the usual curtains to those of violet during Advent and Lent and for Requiems. In many places, a reversible dossal is used, white or red or green, or perhaps of gold brocade, on one side and of violet on the other. The *Catholic Encyclopaedia* (Art., "Altar," I, 354) interprets the *quoad fieri potest* of the

rubric cited above to mean that antependia of precious materials, even in colors not strictly liturgical, may be used on solemn occasions. This may also be applied to the dossal and riddels so that not only white, red, green, violet, and cloth of gold or silver may be used but also shades like royal purple, blue, and old gold. We need not add that if the altar in question is not one at which the Blessed Sacrament is reserved, black may be employed at Requiems for the color of the altar curtains as it may be used on such occasions for the antependium.

In general, we may say that, while the ideal would be to change the dossal and riddels to match the color of the vestments, this is attended with certain practical difficulties and need not be considered necessary. Again, since a certain latitude is allowed in the matter of the color of the antependium, which *is* prescribed, still further liberty may be taken with the color of the curtains, which are *not* prescribed. Here, again, propriety would indicate that a festive color is out of place when violet or black vestments are to be worn.

DURATION OF THE FORTY HOURS' DEVOTION

A reader has called our attention to the fact that, whether the Forty Hours' adoration is observed with continuous exposition from the first day to the third day or interrupted on the first and second evenings, the Blessed Sacrament should remain exposed at least until noon of the third day. Such is the condition for gaining the indulgences attached to the solemn form of exposition, known as the Forty Hours' Prayer. The evidence for this statement is to be found in the *Raccolta* (no. 140), where we read: "The Blessed Sacrament is exposed to the public adoration of the faithful in the ostensorium about noon on one day, which is counted as the first, and remains so exposed, without any interruption even at night, until *noon* of the third day following." Further on, we read concerning the manner of celebrating the Forty Hours in parish churches in this country, with the exposition interrupted at night: "Where, however, the solemn exposition according to the Clementine Instruction, cannot, in the judgment of the local Ordinary, be carried out, it is held in a manner which may be called *ad instar,* as follows: The Blessed Sacrament is exposed in the ostensorium to the adoration of the faithful during the course of

the morning or about midday and remains so exposed *until midday or evening* on the third day, except that the exposition is interrupted each evening."

THE SECOND MASTER OF CEREMONIES

Question: Is it allowable to have two active masters of ceremonies at a Solemn Mass or is this restricted to a Pontifical Mass? If the second master of ceremonies is allowed, what duties should be assigned to him?

Answer: It is quite in accordance with the custom in Rome to employ two masters of ceremonies even for the ordinary Solemn Mass and it is not restricted to Pontifical Masses. The first *ceremoniere* is in general charge of the direction of the entire function and specifically he is in attendance on the celebrant and hence usually standing beside the latter at the book. The second master of ceremonies looks after the ministers, major and minor, of the Mass. Hence, his duties comprise attending the subdeacon for the Epistle and the deacon for the Gospel, presenting the burse to the deacon during the *Credo,* going with the deacon for the incensation of the choir, unless this is done by the thurifer, and with the subdeacon for carrying the *Pax* to the assisting clergy. This second master of ceremonies looks also to the direction of the acolytes and thurifer in the performance of their office and it is customarily he who puts incense in the censer for the incensation at the elevations. He usually attends also to removing the book from the altar during the incensations at the Introit and Offertory.

A third master of ceremonies may be used to direct the clergy *in choro* in the matter of standing and kneeling and sitting down, as well as in the removal and replacing of birettas. Additional masters of ceremonies may be employed when necessary, as in processions. Their duties are not defined but are regulated by the needs of the occasion and are controlled by the chief *ceremoniere.*

WILLIAM J. LALLOU

MISSION INTENTION

The Mission Intention for the month of October, 1948, is "for the Catholic Missions of Indonesia."

Analecta

The centenary of the founding of the hierarchy in Australia was commemorated by our Holy Father in a letter of congratulation sent to Archbishop Daniel Mannix, of Melbourne, dated April 6th of the current year.[1] In it our Holy Father noted that it was the enterprising John A. Goold who took possession of the Diocese newly erected by Pius IX and that through the energetic and self-sacrificing toil of the missionaries who entered the new harvest field, the Province of Victoria was so well developed that portions of the original territory of Melbourne were established as the separate Dioceses of Ballarat, Sandhurst and Sale. He observed further that through the persevering efforts of Archbishop Carr the Cathedral of St. Patrick was completed and consecrated in 1897, dedicated to the Patron of the country to which Australia is indebted for her first missionaries and for the majority of her Catholic immigrants. The labors of the present Archbishop also offered our Holy Father an opportunity to voice words of unstinting praise for the success achieved in the fields of Catholic Action, the press, and Catholic education. Our Holy Father expressed his satisfaction with the intention of the Archbishop to consecrate his Archdiocese and the whole Continent of Australia to the Immaculate Heart of Mary, and he prayed that the Mother of God would deign to accept his devoted offering and preserve his country from erroneous political and social doctrines that it might continue on its path of prosperity and progress. The letter closed with the bestowing of the Apostolic Benediction on all who would participate in the ceremonies marking the observance of the centenary.

An encyclical epistle of May 1, 1948,[2] was addressed to the universal hierarchy urging, as in past years, frequent prayers, especially on the part of children, at the altar of Mary, to which should be joined virtuous living and mortification. The purpose now is not the end of the war, as it was in the past, but the coming of peace among nations and classes of men and the recognition of the freedom which it is religion's right to enjoy. A special petition was asked for peace in Palestine, so full of the memories of

[1] *Acta Apostolicae Sedis,* XL (1948), 177.

[2] *Ibid.,* p. 169.

the Redeemer and the Redemption. Moreover, the epistle appealed for the dedication of families, parishes and dioceses to the Immaculate Heart of Mary. It closed with the Apostolic Benediction bestowed on all the members of the hierarchy and on all who would give a ready ear to the exhortations contained in it.

In his allocution to the Ambassador of Brazil, dated May 3, 1948,[3] on the occasion of the latter's presentation of his credentials, our Holy Father referred to the statement in his Easter message that the present is the great hour for the Christian conscience and expressed his conviction that the complete realization of its potentialities could be expected from the people of Brazil whose monumental statue of Christ proclaims their loyalty to the world.

By an Apostolic Constitution of Aug. 10, 1947,[4] a new Eparchy of the Coptic Rite, that of Lycopolis, was established from territory separated from the Eparchy of Thebes.

By another Apostolic Constitution, dated Jan. 18, 1948,[5] a cathedral chapter was established in the Diocese of La Spezia, established Jan. 12, 1929 by Pius XI and united to the Dioceses of Sarzana and Brugnato. The new chapter was constituted to include ten canons (with a canon theologian and a canon penitentiary) and two dignitaries (that of *primicerius* and that of archdeacon). The chapter was temporarily attached to the pro-cathedral parish church of the Assumption, pending the building of the Cathedral of Christ the King.

The name of the Vicariate of Transvaal was changed to the Vicariate of Johannesburg by a degree of the Sacred Congregation for the Propagation of the Faith, dated Apr. 9, 1948,[6] in which the reason for the change is given as the fact that since the establishment by a decree of the same date of the Vicariate of Pretoria, the previous Vicariate no longer comprised the whole territory of the civil Province of the Transvaal.

Under the catalogue of appointments made by the Sacred Congregation for the Propagation of the Faith there is found, under date of Jan. 8, 1948,[7] that of Most Rev. Francis Gleeson, S.J., as Vicar Apostolic of Alaska.

[3] *Ibid.*, p. 180.
[4] *Ibid.*, p. 172.
[5] *Ibid.*, p. 175.
[6] *Ibid.*, p. 183.
[7] *Ibid.*, p. 184.

RECENT PONTIFICAL APPOINTMENTS PUBLISHED IN THE ACTA APOSTOLICAE SEDIS

Protonotaries Apostolic ad instar participantium:

Jan. 18, 1946: Rt. Rev. Thomas J. Travers, V.G., of the Diocese of La Fayette in Indiana.

Aug. 20, 1946: Rt. Rev. Michael L. Kerper, of the Archdiocese of Dubuque.

Dec. 18, 1947: Rt. Rev. Patrick J. Geehan, V.G., of the Archdiocese of San Antonio.

Commander of the Order of St. Sylvester, Pope:

Sept. 18, 1945: Col. Charles M. Parkin, U.S.A.

JEROME D. HANNAN

The Catholic University of America,
Washington, D. C.

THE CHURCH AND THE MISSIONS

And here, indeed, is a duty which the Church, faithful to the divine mission entrusted to her, has never neglected. What has been the object of her labors for more than nineteen centuries? Is there any other work she has undertaken with greater zeal and constancy than that of bringing the nations of the earth to the truth and principles of Christianity? To-day, as ever, by Our authority, the heralds of the Gospel constantly cross the seas to reach the farthest corners of the earth; and We pray God daily that in His goodness He may deign to increase the number of His ministers who are really worthy of this apostolate, and who are ready to sacrifice their convenience, their health, and their very life, if need be, in order to extend the frontiers of the kingdom of Christ.

—Pope Leo XIII in the Encyclical *Praeclara,* issued June 20, 1894.

Book Reviews

THE DIOCESAN CURIA, ITS ORGANISATION ACCORDING TO HISTORY AND CANON LAW. By the Most Rev. Dr. L. Mathias, S.C., Archbishop of Madras. Madras: The Good Pastor Press, 1947. Pp. xxiv and 305.

The Diocesan Curia is a canonical work which covers considerable ground with reference to the government of a diocese or of the territorial division which in missionary countries holds the place of a diocese. The matter treated in the work relates not only to the personnel and the office of the diocesan curia, but also to such organizations, agencies, boards and committees the establishment of which is called for by the law itself or suggested by practical experience. Thus there is offered a complete conspectus of the means which, either as mandatory by law or as serviceable in the light of experience, are set at the disposal of the competent authority for an efficacious utilization in the proper government of a diocese with reference to the various disciplinary, administrative, judical and executive acts upon which the government depends.

The material is arranged under two general divisions. Part I treats of the personnel involved in the government of the diocese, and Part II deals with the curial office as the center of the organized activities. Part I accordingly treats not only of the strictly curial officials, but also of other officials and organizations which are called for either by the law itself, or by papal rulings, or even by such demands as are the outgrowth of practical experience. Part II deals not only with the manner in which the office of the diocesan curia is to be organized both in its material setup and in its keeping of the records, but also with the proper cataloguing of the documents for their eventual preservation in either the common or the secret archives.

In Part I the various curial officials are treated under the separate headings of the Administrative and the Judicial Departments of the curia. Under the headings of non-curial officials consideration is given to the Diocesan Chapter of Canons, to the Body of Diocesan Consultors, and to the vicars forane set over the various deaneries in the diocese. Under the heading of diocesan boards the discussion turns about the Seminary Board, the Board of Censors, and the Board of Administrators. Under the heading of committees one finds a compact treatment of the Vigilance Committees, of the Confraternity of Christian Doctrine, of the Commission on Church Music, of the various Propagation of the Faith Agencies, of the Committee for Catholic Action, and of the Apostleship of Prayer. A final section deals with such organiza-

tions which in the light of experience call for establishment in a diocese. The kind and the number of these organizations are factors which readily may vary with the varying circumstances that call them into being under the ordinary's authority.

In Part II the physical arrangement of the curial office and the actuarial work connected with the proper recording of official acts and their subsequent cataloguing before they are deposited in the archives are given a detailed study. A due distinction between the current archives and the archival depository is properly stressed. Helpful hints are thereupon offered for the proper filing of the documents in the archival depository, and also for the proper care and restoration of the documents thus filed away. The law of the Code regarding the common and the secret archives is then set forth in a compact manner, and a final chapter deals with the content of the parochial archives and proposes a serviceable manner regarding the arrangement and the tabulation of the documents preserved therein.

A special merit of *The Diocesan Curia* derives from the fact that in numerous instances the general import of the law is reduced to its ultimate particularized application. This application, indeed, may not universally be adapted to existing contingencies in all dioceses alike, but at the same time it reflects to what extent the universal law leaves room for a flexible adaptation in line with the current local exigencies. Hence a particular diocesan curia may well feel free to consider the author's statements on these matters not as mandatory deductions, but rather as discretionary directives. When the universal law is silent about the ultimate details, then these may take their shape and form as local needs may dictate them.

For a complete enumeration of the instances or cases in which the vicar general is unauthorized to act apart from a special mandate given by the episcopal ordinary, the footnote on page 25 should have made reference in addition to canons 1191, 1285, §1, 1423, §1, and 1432, §2. Likewise, in view of the disputed point regarding the nature of the power (ordinary or delegated) inherent in a mandate received by the vicar general, the author's suggestion for the obviating of all uncertainty in a practical way, namely, that the bishop "specify expressly that the ordinary jurisdiction of the vicar general extends also to those particular cases for which it [the mandate] is given", seems not to meet the difficulty, for it presupposes the power to be ordinary when that is the very point in dispute. A surer procedure would consist in the bishop's authorization of the power to the vicar general to subdelegate what he had received by mandate.

From the arrangement of the table of contents it is apparent that insufficient care was expended in the matter of the proper interrelation of the topical headings and of the due subordination of the

subsidiary items to the major points of consideration. The same lack of logical coherence and relationship is correspondingly noticeable in the headings and sub-headings throughout the work. On page 16 and again on page 47 the canons of the Code are designated without any reason as articles. The paragraphs of canons are sometimes referred to with the abbreviated form para., and sometimes with the accepted symbol §. The capitalization of words does not follow any uniform rule or consistent pattern. The grammatical sentence structure calls for correction in numerous instances.

Certain Latin phrases are translated with at most a dubious correctness, as when the phrase *"quavis personarum acceptione posthabita"* of canon 364, §2, 1°, is on page 28 translated as "without consideration of persons", and on page 52 as "without regard for persons." So also the statements "it is not convenient that the vicar general be a parish priest (p. 32)" and "it is not convenient that the vicar general be a synodal examiner (p. 52)" point to a mere transliteration of the Latin *"inconveniens."* These are but examples of the mistranslations which can readily be detected elsewhere in the work.

In the preface the author asserts that initially he had prepared his notes in order to place them at the disposal of the local chancery. It is evident that, when these notes were given to another who was to prepare them for publication in book form, not enough care was expended in editing them in a duly organized fashion and literary structure. But this is a matter which can readily be remedied in any later edition. With that improvement the work will be not only very serviceable in view of its many practical hints and applications, but also much clarified and much more readable in view of its better articulation and enhanced structural expression.

CLEMENT V. BASTNAGEL

BLESSED MARGARET CLITHEROW. By Margaret T. Monro. New York: Longmans, Green and Company, 1947. Pp. 108. $2.00.

Known as "The Pearl of York," Margaret Clitherow has been venerated by the Catholics of England ever since her martyrdom in 1586. She was included among 241 of the English martyrs who were declared Venerable, in 1906. At that time 63 were beatified. Her own beatification was announced on December 15, 1929. In this book, Margaret T. Monro, a convert from Anglicanism since 1937, retells the story of this brave woman, wife and mother, who was executed under Queen Elizabeth "for treason." In effect, the treason consisted in her adhering to the Catholic faith, endeavoring to secure a Catholic education for her children, and permitting Mass to be said in her home at a time

when it was a hanging matter to allow a priest in the house.

Mrs. Clitherow, who in all respects was apparently a highly respected and completely normal person in the community of York, England, was submitted to every form of fanatical badgering by the civil servants of Queen Elizabeth, gruelled by various Protestant ministers, and finally put to death by being crushed under the weight of a door. She was secretly buried in a "filthy place" or "dunghill," which some Catholics succeeded in locating a few weeks later. The secret of her second burial place has never been learned; but during the transfer of her remains, a hand was detached and is still preserved as a relic in the Bar Convent of York.

The source material of this book is drawn almost entirely from "A True Report of the Life and Martyrdom of Mrs. Margaret Clitherow" by Father John Mush, who acted as her spiritual guide during the last three years of her life. At the same time, a general picture is given of England at a time "when the vast majority of English people were Catholic, and wished to remain Catholic" but . . . "simply did not understand that sacrifice could be necessary to keep something that had been theirs for nine hundred years."

The volume is written with a light, feminine touch, and with considerable of the "merry" humor which is sometimes injected into the lives of the English martyrs, partly to save British pride from the fantastically shameful and silly way in which Protestantism was forced upon the English and to make the retelling of it possibly less unpalatable. This approach, on a sustained basis, results in a kind of obliqueness which becomes annoying and tiresome at times. A more direct statement of facts and a more forthright picture of the times and the processes that brought Margaret Clitherow to her doom would, in the opinion of this reviewer, have produced a more substantial volume. Despite this observation, however, this book is a worthy contribution to the memory of a truly great laywoman and more than a subtle indication of what Catholics must always be prepared for, to sustain their principles of freedom for worship and education.

JAMES A. MAGNER

THE DEATH OF SOCRATES. By Romano Guardini. Trans. from the German by Basil Wrighton. New York: Sheed and Ward, 1948. Pp. xiii + 177. $3.00.

In 399 B.C., formal accusation was brought in Athens against Socrates to the effect that "Socrates is guilty of crime, first, for not worshipping the gods the city worships, and for introducing new divinities of his own; next, for corrupting the youth. The penalty is death." The accusers were Meletus, a young, obscure dramatic poet, hardly

known to the philosopher, a merchant and demagogue Anytus, and Lycon, a public orator. A jury of some 500 persons sat in on the trial and finally voted his condemnation.

In this volume, the story of Socrates' defense of himself, together with an exposition of his philosophical views and of his preparation for death, is retold through the famous dialogues written by his disciple Plato. Interspersed with the text—in this case, the English translation of F. J. Church—the author makes a running commentary, to draw out the meaning of the text and to examine the philosophical validity of the arguments.

Four dialogues are thus examined, namely, the *Euthyphro, Apology, Crito,* and *Phaedo.* Although the product of "a real contact with the figure of Socrates" and at least substantially correct in historical sequence, the dialogues represent the developed thought of Plato; and they are examined with this understanding. As is stated in the introductory note, "the purpose of this work is a philosophical interpretation, seeking to enter into Plato's thought; not in order to state and retrace his ideas historically, but in order to approach, under their guidance nearer to the truth itself."

Father Guardini performs his task admirably, without display of scientific apparatus but with solid preparation in Catholic philosophy, bringing out the weakness and dangers of Platonic thought as well as its vigor and sublimity. Particular attention is paid to the meaning of the human spirit or soul relative to the body and historic existence, as might be expected in this subject matter, and to an analysis of the Platonic conceptions of the eternal Ideas and deity.

The book is competently translated, and all in all, is highly recommended to those interested in the meaning of Platonic philosophy, which has played so important a part in forming the thought of the West. It can be offered as of particular value to persons engaged in a study of the "Great Books," and further suggests the possibility and value of similar analyses of the other "Great Books" from the standpoint of Catholic principles.

JAMES A. MAGNER

DANTE THEOLOGIAN: THE DIVINE COMEDY, TRANSLATION AND COMMENTARY. By Patrick Cummins, O.S.B. (St. Louis: B. Herder Book Co., 1948), P. 604. $6.00.

The 1921 volume of the *Acta Apostolicae Sedis* embodies what might well be the least known encyclical of the present century, that addressed by Benedict XV to all Teachers and Students of Letters and Liberal Arts on the occasion of the sixth centenary of the death of Dante (1921).

The veteran monk of Conception, wishing to offer a completely new translation of the entire Divine Comedy to English-speaking readers, was well-inspired to dig out and translate that papal message also. It is Preface, so to say, for his argument (indicated by the title) to have the Vicar of Christ assert:

> The age of Dante was an age when philosophy and theology flourished, when the scholastic doctors gathered into one the doctrines received from their predecessors, gave to these doctrines order and system, and transmitted them to their posterity. Faced with these widely varied systems, Dante chose, as his preferred guide, the Prince of the Scholastics, Thomas Aquinas. From this master, ennobled by angelis mind, the poet derived almost all his philosophical and theological lore, even while he neglected no branch of knowledge, and was assiduous in the study of Sacred Scripture and the Fathers. . . .
>
> We are justly amazed at the breadth and power of Dante's genius. But we likewise see clearly that much of his power came from that divine faith which breathed upon him. . . . And as we follow him along this path of justifying providence to men, so many pictures we find, painted in genuine Catholic colors, of other divine truths: the Trinity in Unity, the Incarnation of the Word, the Redempion of the human race, Mary, the Virgin Mother of God, the Queen of Heaven, exhaustless in mercy and liberality. . . . Dante's poem has turned this road, from depth to height, into an immortal tapestry of Catholic dogma.

As Father Cummin's discoveries of what he styles "Dante's Commentaries on the *Summa*" grew in number and in depth, he began to wish that Dante's English readers had a version as close as possible ot the rhyme and verse form of the gigantic original. The eleven-syllable line in English must have been a tormenting limitation to assume: such a translation is an endeavor never carried through before. The line's very strangeness to our ears makes it rough at first. In all the commentary offered the R-O-M-A—A-M-O-R of the monk emulates that of the poet: a service is done to Dante and to letters, precisely because Christ is Roman of that eternal Rome.

GERALD ELLARD, S.J.

THE PEWS TALK BACK: ESSAYS IN EFFECTIVE PREACHING. By L. Misset, C.P. Westminster: The Newman Book Shop, 1947. Pp. 83. $1.50.

Did you know that, under Pope Leo XIII, the Congregation of Bishops and Regulars issued an encyclical on preaching (1894)? Or the Pope Benedict XV also has an encyclical on the very same subject (1917)? Or that the Consistorial Congregation has promulgated "Norms of Sacred Preaching"? Or that there is an English version of a Method of Preaching written by St. Francis Borgia in the sixteenth century? Or that articles written by Father Missett, originally appearing in this *Review* and in the *Priest* have been supplemented and issued as a booklet by the indefatigable Newman Bookshop?

In seven short, practical chapters, the author, an Instructor of Speech at Holy Cross Seminary, Dunkirk, and Preachers' Institute, Catholic University, handles various phases entering into the "manufacture" (not creation) of an effective pulpit orator. The author has so much apt material from such an abundant array of sources at hand that he gives the impression here of merely indicating lines he might follow, if a full-length treatise should be produced. But his immediate aim is to start preachers into self-conducted "modification centers" right now.

GERALD ELLARD, S.J.

EUCHARISTIC RETREATS. By Blessed Peter Julian Eymard. New York: The Sentinel Press, 1947. Pp. xvi + 336. $1.75.

This third volume of the Eymard series, reprinted within the last decade, is a worthy successor to *The Real Presence* and *Holy Communion*. The thoughts of Blessed Eymard, Founder of the Blessed Sacrament Fathers, emanate from one who is more than a theologian. Panoplied in a simplicity, fire, and unction which spring from the depths of a soul aglow with love for Our Eucharistic Lord, his writings are recognized as classics of Eucharistic piety and doctrine.

In the alignment and treatment of the various topics which constitute each retreat, the author's dominant aim is identified with Christ's own command: "Abide in My Love." In the manifold conferences directed toward leading his auditors to an ever closer union with the Eucharistic Christ, he draws heavily upon the treasury of St. Alphonsus of Ligouri and St. Francis de Sales.

Four complete retreats are contained in the volume. While a Marist, Blessed Eymard preached the first to the members of the Third Order of Mary. It embodies in artful combination a sound Eucharistic theology and the great Marian principles of perfection. The two following retreats were preached after the author had founded his own Congregation. His keynote is Eucharistic sanctification, effected through the reproduction of the life of immolation and consuming love which the Eucharistic Christ leads within the tabernacle. "The Eucharist is the Kingdom of God on earth. My body becomes Its temple, my heart Its throne, my will Its happy and humble servant, my love Its victory," (pp. 203-204). At the conclusion of the third retreat is found an appendix presenting in summary the author's words concerning the establishment, object, means, and spirit of his Congregation. The fourth retreat was preached to the Servants of the Most